

DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

Vol. XX, No. 5

FEBRUARY, 1949

35c Per Copy



Members of Thespian initiating team at the William Penn Senior High School (Troupe 520), York, Pa. (Left to right, seated) Ethel Mae Bentz, Margaret Hendricks, Marian Null, Betty Nell, Hannah Hollander. (Standing) Dr. D. E. A. Glatfelter (Principal), Margaretta Hallock, (Associate sponsor), Stuart Lease, Samuel George, Charles Vandenburg, Richard Jamison, Jackson Taylor, Norma Jean Sipe, and Leon C. Miller (Troupe Sponsor).

IN THIS ISSUE

SHOWBOAT THEATRE AT ITS BEST

By G. HARRY WRIGHT

INCREASING AGE WITH MAKE-UP

By CARL B. CASS

THE FILM OF THE MONTH: JOAN OF ARC

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

STAGING WE SHOOK THE FAMILY TREE

By BURDETTE E. MOELLER

THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY

(Twentieth Anniversary)

Contributors: Barbara Wellington, Marion L. Stuart, Rose G. Smith,
Mary Miller, Harry T. Leeper, Jean E. Donahey.

One of the most distinguished plays of all modern drama and a Pulitzer Prize winner.

OUR TOWN By Thornton Wilder

The play begins in 1901 in Grover's Corners, where the Gibbs and the Webbs are neighbors. During their childhood George Gibbs and Emily Webb are playmates and their lives are inextricably woven together as neighbor's lives are like to be. But as they grow older they pass from this period into a state of romantic but embarrassed interest in one another. And one day, after a slight quarrel, George proposes to Emily in the drug store over an ice cream soda, which he discovers he hasn't the money to pay for. They are a fine young couple, happy in their love for each other and in the happiness the town and their families find in their marriage. But their happiness is short-lived, for Emily is taken in death and placed in the village cemetery on a rainy, dreary day. In the most vitally moving scene in the modern theatre is shown

the peace and quiet of death which can never be understood by the living. Even Emily at first doesn't understand it, and not until she has gone back to relive her twelfth birthday does she understand that life is a transient thing and death brings an eternal peace. She takes her place in the graveyard with her friends while George, unable to see beyond his grief, mourns for her.

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AND CAME THE SPRING By Marrijane and Joseph Hayes

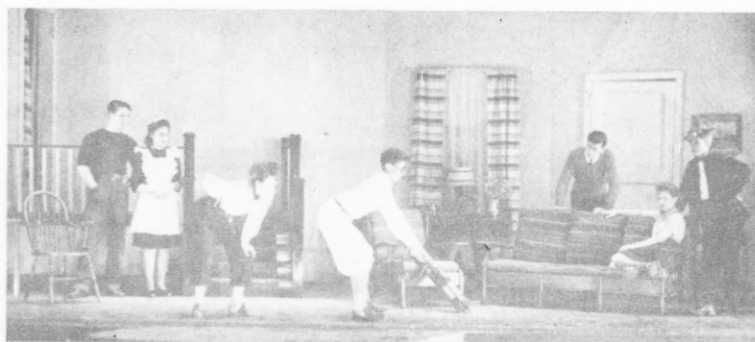
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DRAMATICS

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CONTENTS

Articles

National Director's Message. <i>By Barbara Wellington</i>	4
The Meaning of Membership. <i>By Marion L. Stuart</i>	5
Twenty Years as a Thespian. <i>By Rose G. Smith</i>	6
Twenty Years Before the Cast. <i>By Mary Miller</i>	8
Thespian Spotlights. <i>By Harry T. Leeper, Jean E. Donahey</i>	10
Showboat Theatre at Its Best. <i>By G. Harry Wright</i>	14
Increasing Age with Make-Up. <i>By Carl B. Cass</i>	20

Departments

Theatre on Broadway. <i>By Paul Myers</i>	22
The Play of the Month: <i>Staging We Shook the Family Tree. By Burdette E. Moeller</i>	24
Drama for Children. <i>By Louise C. Horton</i>	26
The Film of the Month: <i>Joan of Arc. By H. Kenn Carmichael</i>	28
The Radio Program of the Month: <i>Mr. Ace & Jane. By S. I. Scharer</i>	31

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By Nathan and Ruth Hale

(Release date, February 1, 1949)

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No Moon Tonight

By Ralph MacDonald

*(Announced in the January issue
of this magazine)*

HERE is an intensely human comedy for a smallish cast (6 M. 5 W), easy to stage, and entertaining every inch of the way. Thoroughly tested in production, **No Moon Tonight** can be handled with the minimum of rehearsals. The judicious balance of characters makes for an interesting assignment, and the plot has many novel twists to delight the local citizenry . . . But see for yourself. Order a copy now, on our liberal exchange plan. While you're at it, add **Hoppsville Holiday** to your order also. The price of each is 85¢.

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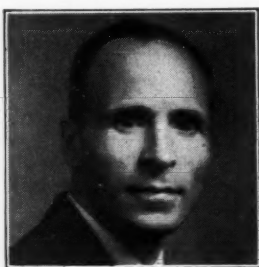
Mention Dramatics

In observance of the Twentieth Anniversary of THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY, celebrated nationally February 6 through 13, DRAMATICS is happy to devote space in this issue to articles and news items concerning activities of the Society, its national officers, regional directors, sponsors, and troupes. DRAMATICS is also happy to publish in this issue complimentary messages sent to the Society by several of its many friends in the college, community, and professional theatre. To all who have contributed to this special issue, DRAMATICS says "Thank You".

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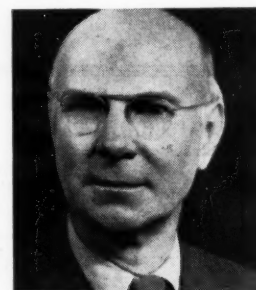
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Alpha Psi Omega Dramatic Fraternity, as parent organization, is proud of The National Thespian Society. In the short space of twenty years the Society has rendered great service to the dramatic activities of nearly a thousand member schools, has contributed significantly to the elevation of dramatic activities in the secondary schools of the entire nation, and has rendered distinguished and valuable service to the cause of the educational theatre at all levels through its publication, DRAMATICS, and through numerous other publications. Heartiest congratulations from Alpha Psi Omega to The National Thespian Society on its twentieth birthday.—E. Turner Stump, Grand Director, Alpha Psi Omega.



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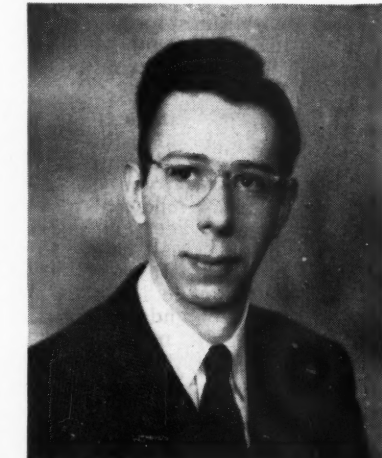
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National Director's Message

By BARBARA WELLINGTON

B. M. C. Durfee High School, Fall River, Mass.

EVERY student and teacher connected with The National Thespian Society should be justly proud of its accomplishments over the twenty years since its founding. As National Director I am happy to take this means of congratulating our troupes which have welcomed the opportunity offered them to join this splendid active organization. Especial honors should go to those schools which were among the pioneers who foresaw the possible advantages in such a society for ambitious young thespians and youthful lovers of the drama.

It took imagination in the early days to anticipate the tremendous good which might result from a recognition organization for dramatics in secondary schools and all praise should go to Dr. Paul F. Opp, faculty member of Fairmont State College, Fairmont, West Virginia, and to Dr. Earl W. Blank, then director of dramatics at Natrona County High School, Casper, Wyoming, who together founded it. These two men have retained their interest in and devotion to the organization although neither of them is now actively teaching in secondary schools. They have served on the National Council and Board of Trustees giving time and energy as well as advice for the betterment of the Society.

The name of Ernest Bavely is familiar to readers of DRAMATICS, as well as to every one of the nearly 106,000 Thespians, past and present, who have received the recognition of membership in our Society. To Mr. Bavely should go considerable credit for the astounding growth and strength of our Society. Although he is ever willing to consider any and all suggestions from each faculty or student member the country over, he is the man who initiates many of our policies with the approval of the Council and the Board of Trustees. Members cannot help but be impressed by the promptness with which letters to College Hill Station, Cincinnati, Ohio, are answered. Mr. Bavely is constantly on the alert to embrace each opportunity for improving our Society and educational dramatic circles.

Some readers of DRAMATICS may not realize the services offered by The National Thespian Society through its central office. Expert advice is sent to any dramatics art director, on application, concerning the various phases of play production or a school program. An inclusive list of plays, appropriate for production in high schools has been distributed. Practical and inspiring articles on casting, rehearsing and acting have been published by the Society. The office sends upon request, articles on lighting, stagecraft, costuming and make-up. A booklet has recently been released giving the names and addresses of commercial firms who furnish services in all phases of play production. This list was compiled by

On behalf of the AETA Council and membership-at-large, I want to extend to The National Thespian Society very best greetings on its twentieth birthday. To the many Thespian members and member-groups everywhere, congratulations, and good wishes for many years to come.—H. D. Albright, 1948 President of the American Educational Theatre Association.

Thespian sponsors who had actually patronized the respective companies.

Any school may receive concrete suggestion on how to publicize its dramatic arts program or "put over the show". Much of this material has been published in the pages of this magazine and has also been reprinted for further distribution. The Society has furnished articles on suggested study courses in dramatic arts for secondary schools, classroom teaching of dramatics, the organization and functioning of an extra-curricular dramatics club, management of a student play production staff, equipment for the high school stage, organization, including judging, of drama festivals. Sponsors of Thespian troupes may borrow copies of play books freely from the central office. Most publishers cooperate in adjusting their royalty quotations to member troupes which apply in advance through the national headquarters.

The National Thespian Society is first and foremost an educational organization of students and their teachers. It is established in secondary schools in order to advance standards of excellence in various phases of production of the dramatic arts and to stimulate among boys and girls a deep appreciation of world drama, as well as an active interest in all aspects of the high school theatre. The Society is sponsored and governed by the teachers and pupils who make up its membership. The legislative body is a National Convention of sponsors which meets every five years to formulate

Heartiest congratulations on the occasion of Thespian's twentieth birthday. It is fitting that you are coming of age at a time when your love for the theatre and your activity in its behalf could scarcely be more needed. As each year sees all phases of professional creative theatre become increasingly more circumscribed and strangled by economic evils, it becomes more apparent that you, the non-Broadway theatre, must assume and be responsible for keeping alive the high tradition of the American stage. Your record of the first twenty years makes you entirely fitted to assume a leading place in the ranks of those dedicated to this job of building a greater and better theatre throughout this country. May your next two decades be even more successful than these just past. Again, our best wishes to the Thespian theatre in all forty-eight States.—Garrett H. Leverton, Editor, Samuel French.

policies for the progress and welfare of the organization and to elect national officers according to the national constitution. Each sponsor, or faculty advisor of an active troupe has a vote. Executive, administrative and judicial powers are vested in a National Council which consists of the National Director, Assistant National Director, Executive Secretary-Treasurer and two Senior Councilors.

The National Thespian Society is an honor society in that students are recognized and granted membership for having performed with merit in dramatic productions, thus having met the membership requirements of their respective troupes. These standards are high but are well within the reach of an earnest, capable, pupil. Each candidate for membership is required to contribute services to the dramatic arts program of his school commensurate with playing meritoriously a leading or major role of at least seventy speeches in one full length play or two one act plays, each role containing not less than thirty speeches. Work in any phase of play production which requires equal responsibility, time, ability and thoroughness may be recognized by the local sponsor, under a point system, as meeting national requirements for membership.

Much of the preceding information is an old story to the nine hundred forty established Thespian troupes, which constitutes our Society. Although many of them are located near the east central portion of the United States, where it was founded, we now have established troupes in all the forty eight states, Panama Canal Zone, Alaska, Hawaii, Egypt and Japan. So now we are fast becoming an international organization which may well be a forward step in establishing understanding and good will among the young people of the nations and help bring about the lasting world peace for which we pray.

To the troupe sponsors I say keep our standards high. By all means have fun in our school programs, but let us not be satisfied with inferior plays for our public performance. When students are given well written speeches to learn, when communities are offered fine plays to see young people perform, everyone will then share in general pride and satisfaction that all the time, efforts and talent are justified.

My message to the many active Thespians now enrolled in our Society is to urge you to utilize to the utmost the fine opportunities offered you. Thespian membership brings fellowship with other boys and girls eager and able to "star", in a large or small capacity, in dramatic productions. It means sympathetic and enthusiastic leadership of your troupe sponsors and national officers who are devoting much time and effort in your behalf. It also means spiritual kinship with the great world theatre which extends from the golden days of Greece down to our present-day television broadcasts. You are taking your place with the lovers of the Drama.

The Meaning of Membership

AN OPEN LETTER TO THESPIANS

By MARLON L. STUART
Champaign Senior High School,
Champaign, Illinois

Dear Thespians:

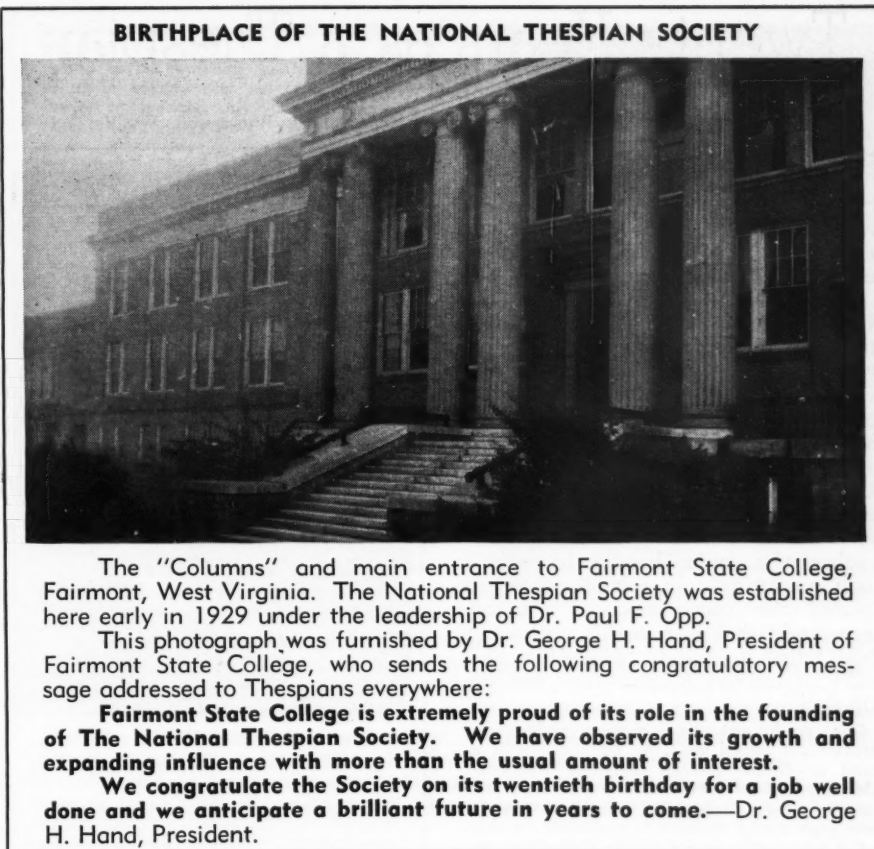
DO you recall that part of your Thespian initiation ritual which reads "if the sparks of the past are to be kept alive and glowing, and if the light of Drama is to brighten the way for mankind, we must ever add new fuel to the flame?" Did you stop, as an Understudy, to realize what it means to be named by The National Thespian Society as the newly assigned attendant of the light?

As an attendant of the flame of Drama, you pledged yourself to the responsibilities of the past and to the privileges of the present. You promised to pattern your dramatic activities according to the rights and privileges of all concerned. You pledged yourself to follow the motto of The National Thespian Society and in every assignment you promised to "act well your part, for there all honor lies." Why?

These questions were asked of the members of Troupe 106 of the Champaign Senior High School. Individual replies were indicative of the superior high school pupils that affiliate with the Society and the high ideals that the Society advances.

Practically, every member responded to the question by pointing to the great pride that each experienced when he was named a Thespian member. *It was a pride of personal achievement.* A satisfaction that came to the individual because he had set a goal for himself and through his own efforts and work had been able to achieve that goal. We of the National Council recognize your pride and respect you for it, for it is our belief that our democracy becomes a better democracy when its citizens are trained to set personal standards of achievement and then exert self-discipline to meet those standards. Before you were able to feel this pride of membership, you had to set your standards high and disciplined yourself to meet such standards satisfactorily. Some of the standards of production which you met included getting to rehearsals on time, practicing diligently while you were there, and serving your school and community willingly with hours of extra work while you learned to work and play together. Because you wanted to be a Thespian you learned how to "act well your part" and in the process of learning you became a better citizen of your school and your community.

On becoming a Thespian you learned to give freely of your talents for your new Society was pledged to promote the best in friendly relationships between departments of your school and between your school and your community. Yes, you learned that your Thespian Troupe was often called upon to provide programs for your community. You learned to contribute to philanthropic work as you worked on fund-raising drives, or you entertained shut-ins in hospitals, or you provided entertainment for



BIRTHPLACE OF THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY

The "Columns" and main entrance to Fairmont State College, Fairmont, West Virginia. The National Thespian Society was established here early in 1929 under the leadership of Dr. Paul F. Opp.

This photograph was furnished by Dr. George H. Hand, President of Fairmont State College, who sends the following congratulatory message addressed to Thespians everywhere:

Fairmont State College is extremely proud of its role in the founding of The National Thespian Society. We have observed its growth and expanding influence with more than the usual amount of interest.

We congratulate the Society on its twentieth birthday for a job well done and we anticipate a brilliant future in years to come.—Dr. George H. Hand, President.

community meetings. Your Thespian Troupe was an active organization and you wanted to be a member of that activity. As a Thespian you were using your talent to brighten momentarily the way of mankind. Drama demands vitality and enthusiasm of its torchbearers. Your desire for activity made you a torchbearer. Jean Weiss of Troupe 106 says, "Ever since my older sister used to tell me of the things of service that Thespians would do, I have made it one of my ambitions to become a member. Now that ambition is realized I am truly grateful to be a Thespian."

It is an honor to be a member of Thespians. Babette Stipes and Rosann Gelvin respect the high regard that the name Thespian carries in Champaign High School. Such an honor is a tribute to former Thespian members who were responsible for building the Thespian name. Other members have ment their responsibilities and have given the best to their assignments. Such members have been interested in building the name of Thespians and not in perpetuating personal glories. In the early Thespian learning "of acting according to the rights and privileges of all concerned" the present troupe enjoys a position of honor. Newly initiated Thespian Betty Wiedrich expressed this sentiment when she said: "When I made Thespians, finally, I felt no honor could be greater." Self importance of earlier members was lost to the greater importance of building the Troupe as a whole.

There is pleasure that comes when one is a Thespian member. Jim Mingee states that he is most "happy to know that he is one member

of an organization that is made up of thousands of other high school members all over the United States who are united in the common bond of working for a common goal of creating a spirit of active and intelligent interest in dramatics." It is the spirit of brotherhood that Jim appreciates. This spirit is built in part by local troupe activities in the exchange of programs, friendly get-togethers and "good neighbor" policies. This spirit is also built through the organization's publication of DRAMATICS which carries in addition to many articles reports of troupe activities. Such a spirit of brotherhood is a healthy attitude in that school procedures provide experiences in democratic living.

Perhaps the best measure of being a true Thespian member may be found in the statement of Judy Carothers when she says: "It is not in acknowledgment of the time and effort which I have given to the dramatics department, for I have enjoyed every minute that I have spent working there, which was rewarded by Thespian membership; but that having received my membership I shall not stop working but shall work that much harder." In such members The National Thespian Society has its greatest assets. The National Council realizes that in being a Thespian the high school student is not only rewarded for the work which he has already done, but that in becoming a Thespian member he has expressed his desire to do ever greater work. This is the sustenance or the fuel by which Thespians feed the flames of drama:

Very sincerely yours,
MARION L. STEWART,
Senior Councilor

Twenty Years as a Thespian

By ROSE G. SMITH

Sponsor, Thespian Troupe 23, Williamson High School, Williamson, W. Va.

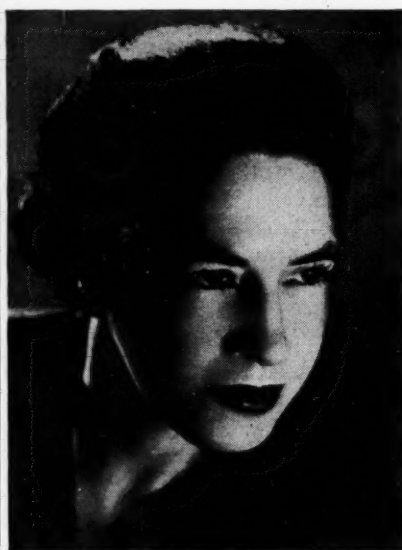
THE National Thespian Society is receiving congratulations not only from its members, but from those bystanders who saw a faint hope for high school dramatics become a shining reality.

When I first became aware of The National Thespian Society in 1929, I had just begun teaching in a high school where plays had been directed by any teacher willing to assume the work and responsibility. I had just received my degree at the University of West Virginia, and was teaching in the demonstration school when the superintendent and principal of Williamson High School came to the University in search of a teacher who could "handle dramatics". Such an attitude in school executives assured me cooperation. I worked desperately that first year. Without a club, I had to start at the bottom and build an interest in something besides slap-stick.

Our equipment was meager-ready-made, atrocious, baronial flats, to be used with a grand or simple setting. Lighting was considered adequate with two rows of tops and one of footlights. My first problems were to teach high school students to build sets suitable to the play and to build within themselves responsibility FOR the play.

I needed for that first play a big awkward boy, and I found him in a football player who "wanted to be in a play". Play practice, though, was quite unimportant to him, and absence or tardiness should be excused, in his mind, because he made the touchdowns. The first time he cut practice needlessly, however, I explained to him that I preferred to work with someone who was dependable. I substituted for him a smaller boy, but a hard worker, and the play went over with a good deal of praise from the people who were interested in bettering high school dramatics. That was the last time I had to drop a member of the cast for cutting practice. Regularly, too, I use both football and basketball stars. They discovered that hard work on the stage can be as much fun as hard work on the court or gridiron. This situation has helped make the community drama-conscious. For many years, Williamson spectators have enjoyed athletics, from the standpoint of seeing a good game and from seeing individual players produce—with cooperation, hard work and determination. We still have athletics with vital interest, but athletics share honors with Thespians, from students and citizens alike, who enjoy a good performance.

That year, 1929, The National Thespian Society was organized and Williamson High School became a charter member, designated as Troupe 23. It was a lovely prop. We publicized it as much as possible in the local papers, and play work took on more importance.



ROSE G. SMITH

THE National Thespian Society is proud of Rose G. Smith. She and Mary Miller (see story on page 8) are the only sponsors from the seventy-one teachers who were first to join the Society in 1929 who have the honor of having sponsored the same troupes for twenty consecutive seasons. Miss Smith has other achievements of which she and those who know her are proud. She has consistently won high honors in the West Virginia High School Drama Festival from the time the festival was established in 1932. Her school and community know and love her for the excellence of her dramatic performances and for the large number of students who have left her classroom season after season with a greater understanding and appreciation of the theatre and drama. And understanding Miss Smith as well as we do, we know that these complimentary words which she so richly deserves will in no way lessen her determination to go forward with her dramatics program in the seasons which lie ahead. We are thrilled to present her story as part of the 20th anniversary celebration of the founding of The National Thespian Society. — EDITOR

We wanted members, but we held rigidly to the set qualification for admission to the Society. Since there was more or less mild curiosity as to what was going on, I had to be careful as to choice of play. It had to appeal to popular demand, and yet I wanted to make the students "good play" conscious. We did comedies, mysteries, and costume plays for a couple of years. We gave THE WHOLE TOWNS TALKING, THE BRAT, MIGNO-

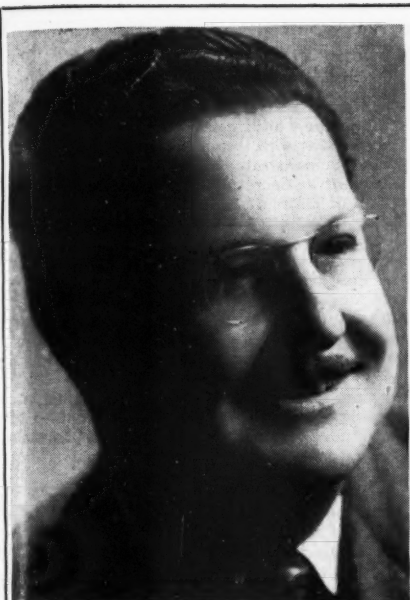
Heartiest congratulations on your twentieth anniversary. Both as individual and collective chapter groups you have done much to increase the stature of the American Educational Theatre. May your success continue through the coming decades.—Lee Norvelle, President, Theta Alpha Phi; Director, Indiana University Theatre.

Congratulations to The National Thespian Society for its twenty years of service to the educational theatre in the high schools of the country.—William P. Halstead, Executive Secretary, American Educational Theatre Association.

NETTE, THE JADE GOD, JUNE MAD, YOUNG APRIL, YOUNG LINCOLN, and GREEN STOCKINGS. The town responded beautifully and gave us full support. In the meantime, we purchased spots, floods, and gelatines. We bought a cyclorama and new velvet stage curtains. With the sympathetic understanding of the principal, we were given a small room near the stage which we fitted up as a green room. That, I believe, with its make-up shelf, mirrors, and lights, is the pride of the Thespians.

Later we did *Little Orphan Annie*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Seven Sisters*, *Little Women*, *Ever Since Eve*, *Sun-Up*, *Jane Eyre*, and *The Little Minister*. Between the two three-act plays each year, we worked on one-act plays. They were not very popular for awhile. They ended too quickly for the general mind. With them we couldn't make expenses for traveling, but we used the proceeds of a three-act play to enter the West Virginia High School Drama Festival sponsored by The Thespian Society. Our first entry was *The Crippled Heart*. We took second place in the State Festival and the one act play took on a new importance. The following year, we entered the festival again and we were fortunate enough to take first place in the finals with *The Dictator Visits His Mother*. In my opinion a good play depends upon the acting of the players and not on the size of the school which produces it. For that reason, I have petitioned that our Troupe be judged in the group with the larger high schools. That too, I think, has spurred interest in play work here. Thespians, by that time, were important people in school. They gave a costume dance for alumni and new members. The next year we took *The Flight of the Herons* to the State Festival and received Superior rating on it. That year, 1941, the first National Drama Conference was held at Indiana University. We were invited to present our play there, but Bloomington was quite a distance. The civic organizations in Williamson, however, sent the cast for a wonderful week to the National Conference. Thespians began to enjoy a lively reputation. The results of our Thespian play try-outs were as excited as the results of a class election. The next year, we took to the State Festival, *The Parting at Insdorf*, and we received first place again. Then the war stopped the festivals. We tried to keep interest going by presenting three one-act plays on one evening program, one play, of course, composed only of Thespians.

We entered the first tournament after the war with *Heritage of Wimpole Street*. Again we won first place in the State Festival at Morgantown. Thes-



JOHN W. STEVENS

Mr. Stevens is another Thespian sponsor whose name appears in the ranks of those pioneers who twenty years ago helped establish The National Thespian Society. He established Thespian Troupe 29 at the East Moline, Ill., United Township High School where he has served as dramatics director for the past twenty years. The record tells us that the following students were registered as charter members from East Moline under date of May 6, 1929: Lucille Schone, Mildred Davis, Don Smedley, Robert J. Smith, Joseph Giesler, Edward Schelling, Darrel Barritt, J. C. Dralle, Elvera Lundren, Earl Uritte, Dorothy Von Ach, Marvin Williams, Ernest Perlich, Peter Boyle, Francis B. Morgan, Henry Hynd, Elva Hoff, Florence Courtney, and Helen Phillips. In what plays did these students earn their Thespian qualifications? Mr. Stevens reported these titles twenty years ago: **WHAT HAPPENED TO JONES, THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR, THE WONDER HAT, NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH, MISS CHERRY BLOSSOM, and TROUBLESOME CHRISTMAS PRESENT.** Some years later the East Moline Troupe withdrew from the Thespian Society. On February 20, 1946, Mr. Stevens brought his school again into the ranks of the Society, establishing Troupe 688 with a team of twenty-six charter members. Has twenty years of dramatics lessened Mr. Stevens' enthusiasm for the theatre? Not in the least. He writes us that he gave **MY SISTER EILEEN** in November, **ALL THE YEARS** in December, and this issue of **DRAMATICS** will find him rehearsing **ALL MY SONS** which will be staged in February. Last season the East Moline Thespians won top honors in the state drama festival held at the University of Illinois.

pian interest was high again, and the following year we entered *Senor Freedom*. We did not win any special honors with it, but it is a good play and we had fun doing it. Last year we entered *Where the Cross Is Made* in the State Festival. The naming of first place had been eliminated. Plays were to be rated only. We received gratifying criticisms and superior rating.

It is a pleasure to congratulate The National Thespian Society on the occasion of its twentieth birthday. Those of us in college and university departments of speech profit greatly by the stimulation and training which the National Thespian Society provides for thousands of high school students. Distinction in the activities of the Society is a credit to any young man or woman interested in the theatre.—James H. McBurney, Dean, School of Speech, Northwestern University.

We've been fortunate in West Virginia in having men of large vision as critic judges. Visiting casts at District and State festivals have been able to see what other schools are doing. The very sincere criticisms of the judges have been a real force in building up a discerning attitude in the students' own minds. They actually can see the difference between good and bad drama. Most students have seen very few professional plays. They base their judgment on what they see in Thespian festivals, and it is surprising how good their judgment is. Association with The National Thespian Society has given some of my students a lasting interest in stage work in some form. One of our former Thespians is writing dialogue in Hollywood. Another is entertaining in night clubs in New York. Another is under contract for five years with television. One of our Thespians, who was named first on the all state cast of 1948, plans to go on the legitimate stage.

Yes, Thespians has been a vital factor in Williamson High School for twenty years. Community appreciation of drama has noticeably improved through the production of Thespian plays. This appreciation has enabled us to select the better royalty plays and to use professional costumes. Not only is drama itself affected, but in the attempt of public education to aid the student in adjusting himself to adult life, Thespian has opened additional outlets. Thespians take great pride in the fact that civic organizations feel free to call upon them. Last year the troupe gave fourteen performances in one week to civic clubs, neighboring school, and over the air. They have learned to adjust themselves to unstage-like surroundings such as hotel dining rooms, churches, the banquet hall, or the microphone. As senior sponsor, I have charge of our formal graduation. Each year, I recognize anew, the value of Thespians trained to stage work.

I should like to express my appreciation to The National Thespian Society for the suitable awards made available for dramatic work. It is all very well to have the satisfaction of a "good job well done", but it is certainly a warm experience for a student to be publicly recognized on our annual Award Day,

Congratulations to The National Thespian Society on twenty years educational theatre work for the living theatre. You have insured, not only the players and the technicians, but the audiences of tomorrow. You have set an example which we here in England are only now beginning to follow. My only hope is that our achievements may be as great as yours.—George Taylor, Editor, The Amateur Stage, Yorkshire, England.



WYLIE FETHERLIN

Those who know Wylie Fetherlin well, and we claim that privilege, are aware of his genuine interest in all phases of dramatic work at the high school level. Wylie's name first came to our attention in the spring of 1929 as founder and sponsor for a Thespian Troupe at the Circleville, Ohio, High School. His capacity for hard work and his determination to establish a strong dramatics program were soon apparent. In due time, Wylie moved to another Ohio school where he also established a troupe. During the school year 1939-40 he established Thespian Troupe 400 at the Edward Lee McClain High School, Greenfield, Ohio. This Troupe has grown and prospered under his capable leadership, with his dramatics program now including several major plays a season, trips to all drama festivals and conferences within travel distance, and numerous radio broadcasts from several stations in his area. We honor Wylie Fetherlin for his high standards of Thespian leadership. And in case he is not certain of the record, we like to publish here the first group of Thespians he reported to the national office under date of May 15, 1929: John Heiskell, Charles Kirkpatrick, James Brown, Elliott Barnhill, Hugh Cartright, Mary Mae Haswell, Marie Kellstadt, Elizabeth Roundhouse, Margie Hunsicker, Margaret Ann Courtright, Martha Mary Wolfe, Howard Greeno, Veronica Kuhns, Evan Phillips, Virginia Given, Joe Griffith, Carl Wallace, Alice Roof, Minnida Lyle, Esther Drum, Jeanne Crowe, Earl H. Hussey, and Harry Grant.
—EDITOR

when Thespians certified are presented with the other school trophies.

I am indeed proud to have had a part, however small, in this great movement for better entertainment. And I am especially proud that my school and my community supported us in our desire and thus have been a part, since the very beginning, of an organization that has made such impressive progress. I am proud, too, that my state has the distinction of having initiated the movement.

Twenty Years Before the Cast

By MARY MILLER

Danville High School, Danville, Illinois

LOOKING back over the past twenty years, I see the Thespian organization as a strong, helpful hand—extended at all times—willingly and gladly; as a clear head—with definite and worth-while suggestions and directions; as a kind heart—offering friendly, kind, and inspiring counsel; as a powerful body—upon which to rest for decisions and instruction.

As I glance at our framed Thespian charter which hangs proudly in the hall of Danville High School, I find only three Thespians' signatures for 1929:—Emma Ankele, Frances McReynolds, and James Marlatt. Has Thespian helped them through the years as it has helped me?

Emma is now a splendid mother, Mrs. Arthur E. Dillner, wife of a successful attorney at Dolton, Illinois, with three lovely children on whom to bestow her wealth of poise, personality, warmth, and love. Frances is a career woman and is now in Washington, D. C. as a member of the Anglo-American Caribbean Commission. As a member of this joint American-British commission, Frances does much research, prepares articles to be read to Congress, and flies at least twice a year to the Islands. Jimmy—our boy wonder of the stage—is once again in military life. He was a captain in World War II and is now on the Criminal Investigation Staff at Camp Pickett, Virginia. Jimmy agrees with me that the theatre trains for action. In this last war the play boys of our American stages certainly showed that they knew how to work; they made excellent soldiers, sailors, and marines. They had learned the tricks of working together toward a common goal, of taking directions, of accurate timing. Jimmy was a superb actor and is a superior military man. Yes, I believe that the participation of these three in high school dramatics, along with their election to Thespian membership, has helped to play a part in making them finer, nobler Americans.

We have always used Thespian as an honorary society in our school; only those who have reached the top brackets in acting ability and dramatic and radio performance are entitled to membership. Yet our list of members has grown until now, in '49, we have around twenty-five seniors each year securing the coveted honor. Does not this show that Thespian has fostered dramatic art and helped dramatics to have a real place in our school?

Who can begin to tell what the helps from national office in the form of news letters, the monthly magazine, various pamphlets, brochures, etc. have meant to the harassed director? Here can be found the answer to almost any question that arises. Too, the ambition in the hearts of our "would be" Garsons and Gregory Pecks to become Thespians has surely added to the zeal and perfection with which they played their roles. Again, hopes of pictures in DRAMATICS or their names listed as Star Thespians have pushed and prodded even the most uninspired toward greater heights.



MARY MILLER

It doesn't seem so very long ago that we received an application for Thespian membership from Mary Miller of Danville, Illinois. Yet the record tells us that happened twenty years ago—the spring of 1929 to be exact. The record also tells us that Miss Miller, like Miss Smith whose story appears on pages 6-7, has been a Thespian sponsor for twenty consecutive seasons. We are happy to bring Miss Miller's record, as she tells it, to the attention of our readers. Hers is a story of great effort and real accomplishments in promoting better dramatics at the high school level.

Yes, Thespian has meant far more through the years than I can ever show.

High school dramatic art has made much progress through the last twenty years because the directors and their youthful actors have forced many educators and civic-minded leaders to recognize the values to be derived from

Congratulation! The work of The National Thespian Society in the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools is the spade work that prepares the way for understanding audiences and the orientation of careers, and it is a hopeful sign that things of the spirit still have a place in a world that emphasizes to an extreme the material. May your good work carry on. It is vital.—Charles F. Prickett, General Manager, Pasadena Playhouse Association.

Congratulations on the twentieth birthday of The National Thespian Society. During that time high school students who have been members of the Society have become better acquainted with all phases of theatre. Moreover, they have, through the inspiration of the national organization, been stimulated to greater creative activity and to finer appreciation of the theatre. May the good work continue.—Magdalene Kramer, Chairman, Department of Speech and Dramatics, Teachers College, Columbia University.

Happy birthday to you! And many of them! As you come of age, you are to be congratulated upon the stimulation you have furnished for high school dramatics, upon the circulation of a fine magazine, and upon the spirit of co-operation with other organizations you have demonstrated!—Lillian W. Vorhees, Executive Secretary, Southern Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts.

participation in dramatics. The players receive aesthetic as well as practical values—here the student learns poise and grace of bodily actions, he acquires coordination of mind and body, he develops self-confidence. His imagination and memory are developed, along with his individuality; his voice receives attention, and he learns how to enunciate, how to pronounce words that perhaps have always eluded him, how to breathe and to place his voice properly, yes, how to do many things that will help him in his adult years. He learns how to give and take, how to work with people, how to subordinate his desires to the welfare of the group. Are these not the very qualities needed for laying a successful foundation for the life he is to meet after leaving school?

A glance at some of the plays we have put on here in Danville High School since we joined the Thespian national organization will give an idea of the high standards we have set: *Skidding, The Youngest, The Goose Hangs High, Vanity, Big Hearted Herbert, Growing Pains, Young April, Midnight, Lease on Liberty, Letters to Lucerne, The Fighting Littles, Come Over to Our House, Tonight We Danced, Clarence, Captain Applejack, The Unseen Way, The Road to Yesterday, Tailor-Made Man, The Royal Family, Charm School, The Adorable Spendthrift, 320 College Avenue, Youth Takes Over, Tish, Sky Road, Incognito, Handy Man.* Surely if, as our friends and patrons say, we have succeeded in offering good, light-hearted, true-to-life fare and have furnished an escape from the work-a-day world and a means of relieving the strain involved in everyday living, we have done much that could be done in no other way.

However, we yet have a long road to follow in enlightening some of our educators who still think that putting on a play is just—"play". They cannot seem to realize that anything which gives so much pleasure and enjoyment as a play can possibly represent hard work and study. Acting demands long hours of concentrated work. These educators must be made to realize that "all round theatre training is a liberal education in itself." Here the student learns to meet deadlines, to stick to a job and see it through no matter how he feels; he learns to know himself. The Thespian magazine, along with other publications that the National Office has sent out to administrators and boards of education, has done much in acquainting these schoolmen with the values of dramatics—in making them begin to realize that stage work "brings to a focus" everything a student is learning and puts it to a practical test.

At this time, I would like to quote from Ernest Bavely's article in the N.E.A. JOURNAL of December, 1945; showing teachers in all fields that dramatics has its place in the modern

May I offer my warmest congratulations on the twentieth anniversary of The National Thespian Society's founding. I admire the fine work that your national council and board of directors have done in secondary school theatre education.

—George Freedley, The American National Theatre Academy.

curricula. "Schools must take upon themselves the responsibility of giving our young people basic training in dramatic arts — radio, television, motion pictures, and the stage. This training must serve a two-fold purpose: (a) establish 'consumer's' standards of evaluation and appreciation among boys and girls in the secondary schools, and (b) assist your young people to become, to a much greater degree than is true at present, 'producers' of the dramatic entertainment they require . . . Modern conditions demand that we fully recognize and accept the fact that basic training in dramatic arts appreciation is a social and educational responsibility which must receive its share of attention. We are confronted here not so much with textbook learning, but with learning how to live more intelligently in a new world."

Actors' masks of comedy and tragedy have amusingly been pointed out as perhaps expressing the feelings of the director of dramatics. Long hours of preparation must be spent in reading plays, casting, preparing the script — before starting on the actual rehearsal period. One of the chief elements in a successful production, or so it seems to me, is the director's thorough understanding and knowledge of the play under production. The director from her vantage point out front must "live" the play every day as completely as she hopes her actors will live it when the big night comes. The hours of practice may add lines of fatigue to her face, but she can stand these because of the pleasure she derives from the friendly spirit of cooperation she receives from the cast and backstage crew. The minutiae of detail that she has to look after in regard to stage sets, costuming, make-up, publicity, ticket sale, pre-view assembly — all these she can take in her stride and still turn a smiling face to her cast and friends. Probably the one thing most conducive to the tragic side of the mask is the back-biting comment she must take from fond mammas who are bitter if Johnny does not "make" a play, the enthusiastic, frequently false compliments of the doting father whose little Mary does "make" the grade.

Both comedy and tragedy are involved, but the successful director, I am sure, feels that the smiling side outweighs the frowning when on the night of performance the audience goes away agreeing it is the "best ever", and the cast is elated and joyful over a job well done. Yes, there are many compensations in a direc-

GREETINGS FROM HELEN HAYES



MISS HELEN HAYES

ANTA sends you congratulations and every good wish on the 20th birthday of The National Thespian Society. Happy Birthday! Your National Theatre is proud of you and the many good things you have done for the theatre. It is in you young people that we at ANTA place our hope for the future and it is with every confidence that the theatre will be in good hands. We know that you will dedicate yourselves with integrity to your coming task of leadership. From your ranks will come the Margo Joneses and the Robert Porterfields of the future. Use your youth and imagination to build a theatre that is alive and vital and that will fill the cultural needs of our great country. What you are doing is close to my heart and ANTA's. Blessings.—Helen Hayes, Vice-President, American National Theatre and Academy, New York City.

Many congratulations to The National Thespian Society and a cordial invitation to meet with us at the Hotel Commodore, New York City, December 28-30, 1950.

—Loren D. Reid, Executive Secretary, Speech Association of America.

Congratulations to the officers and members of The National Thespian Society for sincere and cooperative service which you have given during the last twenty years to the advancement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools. My best wishes for continuous service to directors, teachers and students of dramatic arts—

Thomas E. Poag, President, Southern Association of Dramatic and Speech Arts.

tor's life — the feeling of giving something toward the successful maturing of many boys and girls, of showing them how dramatics demands their best, and of helping them realize that while they may kid their teachers, they can't kid an audience.

If "all the world's a stage", our young Thespians are assuredly taking vital steps toward playing stellar roles in LIFE. Truly, play preparation is the marshalling of powerful, animated forces, organized and prepared in advance, to go into splendidly coordinated action at a given moment, that moment when in the auditorium the music stops, the anticipatory hush falls, the footlight glow. CURTAIN GOING UP!

Thespian Spotlights

TWENTY YEARS AGO

By HARRY T. LEEPER

East Fairmont High School, Fairmont, West Virginia

WHEN THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN made its initial appearance in October of 1929, it had an auspicious beginning, with thirty-three of the seventy-one newly organized troupes reporting on their activities of the year before.

The reports gave an interesting picture of the struggle of some of the schools to gain a foothold for some kind of a dramatics program against almost overwhelming odds. Dramatics with them was a stepchild. It had never before been seriously considered as a part of the curriculum. Their reports glowed with the added prestige of a national organization behind their efforts.

The Roger Ludlowe High School, Fairfield, Conn., was a good example. Their school at that time was a converted dwelling; they had to use makeshift stages where they could be found. Undaunted, they turned to the classics for good drama and presented, among other plays that year, *The Miser*, by Moliere.

Another school also reporting giving a classic was Attica, Indiana. *She Stoops to Conquer* proved hugely successful, though much different from their usual three-act comedy.

Some reporting schools had a well integrated program of dramatic activity already, with staging facilities more nearly adequate to their needs. Few yet had a class in drama included in their regular courses of study. The more advanced schools in that year produced from two to five full length plays, in addition to a full schedule of one-act presentations.

Wichita, Kansas, High School led the list with five major productions: *The Hottentot*, *The Boomerang*, *Merton of the Movies*, *A Prince There Was and Golden Days*. Six one-act plays also presented were: *The Valiant*, *A Very Social Service*, *A Penny A Flower*, *Dancing Dolls*, *Knave of Hearts* and *The Hamburg King*.

Natrona High School, Casper, Wyoming, gave four full-length plays: *A Full House*, *The Family Upstairs*, *The Marble Arch* and *The Youngest*. One-act plays reported were: *The Valiant*, *Good Medicine* and *The Grill*.

Also reporting four three-act productions was Weir High School, Weirton, W. Va. *Second Childhood*, *Sunshine*, *Spell of the Image* and *A Tailor Made Man* were their long plays. No one-act plays were mentioned.

Wellsville, New York, in addition to its two major productions, *The Whole Town's Talking* and *The Thread of Destiny*, gave eight one-act plays. They were: *The Crimson Cocoonut*, *The Trysting Place*, *The Ghost Story*, *Station YYYY*, *Etiquette*, *Suppressed Desires*, *Not Quite Such A Goose* and *Evening Dress Indispensable*.

Ilion, New York, High School reported the longest list of one-act plays with fifteen: *The Last Straw*, *Hero Worship*, *Pair of Lunatics*, *Hint to Brides*, *Playgoers*, *Our Aunt from California*, *A Wedding*, *Grandma Pulls the Strings*, *Food*, *Fingerbowl* and *Araminta*, *Pink and Patches*, *Joint Owners in Spain*, *Sardines*, *The Mousetrap* and *In the Spring A Young Man's Fancy*. Their three-act production of the year was *Oh Kay*.

Seventy-five full-length plays were named by the thirty-three reporting troupes as having been used during the previous year. A few of the schools gave an account of their activities without naming the plays they had used.

The most popular play was *The Whole Town's Talking*, with four productions listed. *A Full House* was next, having been given by three different troupes. Those used twice were *Seventeen*, *Oh Kay*, *On The Hiring Line*, *Nothing But the Truth* and *The Brat*.

Some of the other plays, very typical of the times were: *Square Crooks*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Merton of the Movies*, *Icebound*, *The Patsy*, *Duley*, *The Goose Hangs High*, *Clarence*, *The Family Upstairs*, *Kick In*, *Second Childhood*, and the perennial favorite, *Charlie's Aunt*.

Sixty-seven plays were mentioned by name in the list of one-act productions. More than a third of the reporting troupes gave the titles of only their full length plays, saying that they had also produced a number of one-act plays.

Of the reports received from the thirty-three troupes, fourteen states had one report each. These states were Maine, Connecticut, North Carolina, Florida, Tennessee, Ohio, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, California, Louisiana and Wyoming. States with two reporting troupes were New Jersey, Maryland and Arkansas. Massachusetts, Indiana, Iowa and Montana had three troupes which sent in reports, while Michigan and Kansas each had four. Eight troupes reported from New York and Illinois. West Virginia, the home state of Fairmont State College, where The National Thespian Society was organized, led the list of reporting troupes with fourteen.

*DRAMATICS was known as the HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN from 1929 to 1944. Mr. Leeper served as editor of the HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN from 1929 to June 30, 1935.

TEN YEARS AGO

By Jean E. Donahey

Brownsville Senior High School, Brownsville, Pa.

When Gilmore Brown congratulated The National Thespian Society on its ten years of growth in 1939, Thespians were 32,000 strong in membership and had almost 400 troupes established. THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN was being published five times a year, and carried articles on "Modern Playwrights" which included Paul Green, Sidney Howard, Eugene O'Neil, and Maxwell Anderson. Margaret Wentworth in her column "Broadway at a Glance" was recommending that Thespians read and see *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, *Margin of Error*, *Henry IV*, and the revivals of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Outward Bound*.

The motion picture appreciation department of the Thespian magazine centered around *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* starring Raymond Massey, *The Blue Bird*, with Shirley Temple; *Alexander Graham Bell*, with Don Ameche and Henry Fonda; and *Juarez* featuring Paul Muni. This series of guides were written by Harold Turney.

The most popular play among Thespians ten years ago was *Growing Pains*, with the previous year's winner, *New Fires*, rating second spot in number of productions. The list of full-length production in order of their popularity included *Spring Fever*, *Spring Dance*, *Headed for Eden*, *You Can't Take It With You*, *Early to Bed*, *Early to Rise*, *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Youngest*, *Apron Strings Revolt*, *Eyes of Taloc*, *Little Women*, and *Seven Sisters*.

The January-February HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN was especially dedicated to the tenth anniversary of the Society. A letter from Dr. Joseph Rosier, President of Fairmont State College, congratulated the organization on its progress since its founding by the Alpha Psi Omega Fraternity. The officers, National Director Earl W. Blank, Assistant National Director Lotta June Miller; National Field Representative Paul F. Opp and National Secretary-Treasurer Ernest Bavely were pictured, and names of thirty-one regional directors and the fifty honorary members were listed. Pictures and letters from Thespian sponsors who had been with the Society since its founding ten years ago, included: S. B. Kurtz, of Troupe 47, Newton Sr. High School, Newton Kansas; Mary Miller, Troupe 59, Danville, Illinois; E. E. Stwarthout, Troupe 31, Junior-Senior High School, Illion, New York; Howe S. Newell, Troupe 8, Willbraham Academy, Willbraham, Massachusetts; and Rose G. Smith, Troupe 23, Williamson High School, Williamson, West Virginia.

Among the most active troupes in the year 1939 was Troupe 283, at Knoxville Tennessee, which admitted 58 students (from a student enrollment of 2,300). O. E. Sams, Jr., was sponsor of the group and their activities included six full-length plays, fifteen one-act plays, an operetta, and all school review, participation in two drama festivals and some radio programs.

Troupe 256, sponsored by Florence M. Rees, at Twin Falls, Idaho (student enrollment 1,000) qualified and admitted 56 students through three major performances using a double cast, an operetta, state drama festival entry and a number of one-act plays.

A number of troupes and their directors in addition to their two or three full-length annual productions, one-act plays, operettas and reviews, found time to sponsor drama festivals and contests within their district. They played host to from six to twenty other schools, with a well-planned program. Some of the most active in this group were Margaret E. Hoke, Troupe 32 of Delta Colorado High School, Leitha V. Perkins, Troupe 53 of Washington Gardner High School, Albion, Michigan; Bernard D. Greeson, Troupe 179 of Missouri Valley High School, Iowa; Jean E. Donahey, Troupe 187 of Brownsville High School, Pennsylvania; Eugene Ryan, Troupe 111, Burley High School, Idaho; Wilman Mannell, Troupe 196, Hayden High School, Colorado; Vernon C. D. Pinkham, Troupe 218 at Townsont, Vermont; and Barbara Wellington, Troupe 254, Fall River, Massachusetts.

Some troupes received special recognition for their splendid records at state drama festivals. Troupe 177, Orlando, Florida, directed by Mildred E. Murphy, and Troupe 200, Charleston W. Virginia, with Lawrence W. Smith, are two such schools whose plaques and certificates tell eloquently of their successes.

Troupe 353, Abilene, Texas, and Troupe 70, at Laramie Wyoming were awarded prizes for having the best programs submitted to the National office. The purpose of this contest was to help troupe members to become aware of the many fine things that can be done for their troupe through improved programs. Through a similar contest for pictures of plays sponsored by LAGNIAPPE (the magazine of Row Peterson and Co.) Troupe 191 of Webster Groves, Missouri, and Troupe 352 of Robbinsdale, Minnesota, were awarded prizes for photos of their productions.

These are but a few of the many projects sponsored by the Thespian of 1939. Students and sponsors were active, interested, cooperative units upholding and carrying forward the ideals of that original group, to improve the dramatic arts in the secondary schools.

The Carolina Players wish to extend heartiest congratulations to The National Thespian Society on its twentieth birthday. The fine work you have done and are doing merits the highest praise.—Samuel Selden, Director, The Carolina Players, University of North Carolina.

Sincerest congratulations to The National Thespian Society upon the completion of twenty years of effective leadership in the field of high school dramatics, and best wishes for your continued success.—Claude E. Kantner, Director, School of Dramatic Art and Speech, Ohio University.

Congratulations on the twentieth birthday of The National Thespian Society. May the chapters of the Society continue their effective work, for it is from these very roots that tomorrow's national drama structure will continue to grow.—Gilmer Brown, Pasadena Playhouse, Pasadena, Calif.

Congratulations on twenty years of service to the theatre! Now that it has reached its majority, I foresee for The National Thespian Society a career of even greater scope and usefulness.—Barnard Hewitt, Department of Drama, University of Illinois.

HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

THE NATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY was established in the spring of 1929 at Fairmont State College, Fairmont, W. Va. Following the exchange of correspondence between Dr. Paul F. Opp, a faculty member of the Dramatics Department, and Dr. Earl W. Blank, then director of dramatics at the Natrona County High School, Casper, Wyoming, a meeting of interested teachers was held to discuss the advisability of establishing a society for the improvement of dramatic arts in the secondary schools, as was originally suggested by Dr. Blank. In view of the interest shown at this meeting, Dr. Opp communicated with a number of educators and teachers to ascertain their views concerning the proposed organization. Soon after receipt of many replies favoring the founding of the new society, a constitution was drawn and other necessary forms were prepared under Dr. Opp's direction. Ernest Bavely, at the time a student at Fairmont State College, assisted Dr. Opp in launching the organization.

The following major events give some indication of the progress achieved by the Society:

- 1929. Seventy-one high schools affiliated with the Society by June 1, 1929. First issue of **THE HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN** (official organ of the Society) published in fall of 1929 under the editorship of Harry T. Leeper.
- 1930. First national convention held by mail. National officers elected for a five year term.
- 1930-35. Period of rapid development and expansion of services to member schools. A total of 320 high schools were affiliated with the Society as of June 30, 1935.
- 1935. Second national convention held at Hotel Stevens, Chicago, Ill. National officers for next five-year period elected. National Office moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. **HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN** changed from annual publication to a bi-monthly magazine, published five times during the school year under the editorship of Ernest Bavely.
- 1939. Society celebrates its tenth anniversary with coast-to-coast broadcast over National Broadcasting Company. **HIGH SCHOOL THESPIAN** published eight times during the school year, October through May.
- 1940. Third national convention held at Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D. C. National officers for third five-year period elected. A total of 427 high schools affiliated with the Society as of June 30, 1940. Active and alumni student members numbered approximately, 28,704.
- 1941. First National High School Drama Conference sponsored by the Society at Indiana University, Bloomington, Ind. Attended by some 900 representatives. Conference closed with broadcast over NBC hook-up.
- 1942. Society expands activities in behalf of war effort. Cooperates with various war agencies in mobilizing high school dramatics groups behind war program. Representative called to Washington by OWI. Society collects funds for American Theatre Wing.
- 1943. Society launches "High School Theatre for Victory Program," with the cooperation of various government wartime agencies. Some 10,000 high school dramatics groups invited to participate in program. Society sponsors Servicemen's Library Fund.
- 1944. Wartime services continued. Nation-wide contests sponsored. Title of **The High School Thespian** changed to **DRAMATICS**.
- 1945. Fourth national convention held at Deshler-Wallick Hotel, Columbus, Ohio. National officers for next five-year period elected. **DRAMATICS** attains average monthly circulation of approximately 13,500.
- 1947. A total of 837 high schools affiliated with the Society as of June 30, 1947. Active and alumni student membership number approximately 89,000. Second National Dramatic Arts Conference held at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, June 16 through 21, 1947.
- 1948. Number of high schools affiliated with the Society as of June 30, 1948, stood at 902, with an active and alumni membership of 102,845. **DRAMATICS** begins the 1948-49 season with an all-time high circulation of 17,200 for October issue.
- 1949. Society celebrates its twentieth anniversary February 6 through 13, 1949. Number of high schools affiliated with the Society as of January 1, 1949 stood at 940. Plans being made for Third National Dramatic Arts Conference at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, June 13 through 18, 1949.

OUR GOOD
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20th
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Thespian Roll of Honor

The high schools listed below hold a high place of honor in the ranks of The National Thespian Society for the number of years they have been affiliated with the Society.

Troupe No. Present Sponsor

TWENTY YEARS

1. Natrona County High School, Casper, Wyo. Frank D'Illon
2. Fairmont High School, Fairmont, West Va. Lucille Jenkins
3. East Fairmont High School, Fairmont, West Va. Harry T. Leeper
9. Anaconda High School, Anaconda, Mont. Mrs. Helen Devine
12. Sac City High School, Sac City, Iowa
15. Roger Ludlowe High School, Fairfield, Conn. Mrs. Nicholas Di Massimo
16. Harrisburg Township High School, Harrisburg, Ill. Lolo F. Eddy
20. Central High School, Cleveland, Tenn. Mrs. C. F. Kelly
23. Williamson High School, Williamson, W. Va. Rose G. Smith
27. Morgantown High School, Morgantown, W. Va. Dorothy Stone White
30. Big Sandy District High School, Clendenin, W. Va. Lorraine Given
34. Fairview High School, Fairview, W. Va. Mary Sturm
46. Canastota High School, Canastota, N. Y. Rosemary Courtney
47. Newton Sr. High School, Newton, Kansas Aubrey Bilger
50. Roosevelt High School, Wyandotte, Mich. Lawrence Johnson
53. Washington Gardner High School, Albion, Mich. Mrs. A. J. Sharpe
55. Beaver High School, Bluefield, W. Va. Mary Maston
58. Wichita High School East, Wichita, Kansas Hazel Shamleffer
59. Danville High School, Danville, Ill. Mary Miller
69. Dubuque Senior High School, Dubuque, Iowa Sybil Lamb

NINETEEN YEARS

72. Alderson High School, Alderson, W. Va. Ste'la Nelson
73. Manistee High School, Manistee, Mich. Dora Kulow
75. Union High School, Dist. No. 5, Milwaukee, Ore. Nell Flint
84. Princeton High School, Princeton, W. Va. Irene Norris
87. Logan County High School, Sterling, Colo. Helen Jakusza
88. Point Pleasant High School, Point Pleasant, W. Va. Elsie Rardin
91. Isaac C. Elston Sr. High School, Michigan City, Ind. Millie Luck
93. Stillwater High School, Stillwater, Minn. Ethel Gower
94. York Community High School, Elmhurst, Ill. Doris White
99. Weston High School, Weston, W. Va. Mary Christine Swint
103. Neenah Sr. High School, Neenah, Wisc. He'en Poulson
105. Yuma Union High School, Yuma, Ariz. Mabel Cloyd
106. Champaign High School, Champaign, Ill. Marion Stuart
107. Newport High School, Newport, Vt. Alice Coapland
110. New Hampton High School, New Hampton, Ia. Maude Tucker
111. Burley High School, Burley, Ida. Mary Harris
112. Norfolk Sr. High School, Norfolk, Nebr. Ruth Hellman

Troupe No. Present Sponsor

114. Mt. Vernon High School, Mt. Vernon, Ind. Dorothy Feaster
122. Newport News High School, Newport News, Va. Dorothy Crane
123. Laconia High School, Laconia, N. H. Rae Welch
126. Alton Comm. Consolidated H. S., Alton, Ill. Mildred Rutledge
127. Salem High School, Salem, N. J. Marie Oehrle
133. Shenandoah High School, Shenandoah, Iowa Gwendolyn Beavers
135. Berlin Sr. High School, Berlin, N. H.
136. Wichita High School North, Wichita, Kans. Corrine Martin
141. Sault St. Marie High School, Sault St. Marie, Mich. Agnes Solvsburg
142. Bloomington H. S., Bloomington, Ind. Laura Childs
146. Pekin Comm. High School, Pekin, Ill.
148. San Bernardino High School, San Bernardino, Calif. Verna Brown
149. Paragould High School, Paragould, Ark. Mrs. W. J. Stone
150. Stadium High School, Tacoma, Wash. Alice Gaul

EIGHTEEN YEARS

154. Holmes High School, Covington, Ky. Mary Elizabeth Pollard
157. Liberty Memorial High School, Lawrence, Kans. Marjorie Rix
159. Harlan High School, Harlan, Iowa Har'ley Waller
163. Harbor High School, Ashtabula, Ohio Adrienne Spahn
166. Morristown High School, Morristown, N. J. Margaret Eckman
168. Logan Sr. High School, Logan, W. Va. Thelma Juergensmeyer
169. Bluffton-Richland High School, Bluffton, Ohio
170. Omaha Central High School, Omaha, Nebr. Myrna Vance Jones
171. Grafton High School, Grafton, W. Va. Mildren Haddox
172. Arkadelphia High School, Arkadelphia, Ark. Elizabeth Doane
173. Central High School, Bellevue, Ohio Esther Schachtele
176. Butte High School, Butte, Mont.
177. Orlando Sr. High School, Orlando, Fla. Mildred E. Murphy
180. Tuscola Comm. High School, Tuscola, Ill. Thelma Grumbles
184. Bloom Township High School, Chicago Hgts., Ill.

SEVENTEEN YEARS

187. Brownsville High School, So. Brownsville, Penna. Jean E. Donahey
189. Magnolia District High School, Matewan, W. Va. Kathryn M. Talbert
191. Webster Groves High School, Webster Groves, Mo. Roberta Seibert
192. Keokuk Sr. High School, Keokuk, Iowa James McKinstry
196. Hayden Union High School, Hayden, Colo. Mrs. Patricia Fulton
197. Mullens High School, Mullens, W. Va. Ruth O'Dell
198. Grove High School, Paris, Tenn. C'em Krider
199. Williams High School, Williams, Ariz. Marion Higham
200. Charleston High School, Charleston, W. Va. Florence Martin
201. Great Neck High School, Great Neck, N. Y. Bernard Boressoff

Troupe No. Present Sponsor

202. Concord High School, Concord, No. Car. Blanche Stewart
206. Easton High School, Easton, Penna. Herbert Petrie
207. Union High School, Mt. Vernon, Wash. George Hodson
210. Topeka High School, Topeka, Kans. Gertrude Wheeler
213. Central High School, Red Wing, Minn. Dorothy Matchan
214. Carlisle High School, Carlisle, Penna. Helen Martin—Elinor Derr
215. Stambaugh High School, Stambaugh, Mich. Helen Dunham
216. Sunset High School, Dallas, Tex. Wanda Banker
217. Christobal High School, Cristobal, C. Z. Paul Beck
219. Pana Township High School, Pana, Ill. Fern Sawyer
220. Willoughby Union High School, Willoughby, Ohio Florine Carroll
225. Lincoln Comm. High School, Lincoln, Ill. Warren Craig
226. Washington-Irving HS, Clarksburg, W. Va. Lille Mae Bauer
232. Rosedale Jr. Sr. High School, Kansas City, Kans. Edith Youmans

SIXTEEN YEARS

233. Glenbard High School, Glen Ellyn, Ill. Rachel Whitfield
234. Hays High School, Hays, Kansas Marian Perry
235. Ellenville High School, Ellenville, N. Y.
236. Cairo High School, Cairo, Illinois Mary Fitts
243. Greenwich High School, Greenwich, Conn. Ruth Morgan
244. Prophetstown High School, Prophetstown, Ill. Clarence Brown
245. Vandalia High School, Vandalia, Ill. Elizabeth Upchurch
247. Wilson High School, Easton, Pa.
249. L. C. Humes High School, Memphis, Tenn.
250. Central Valley High School, Greenacres, Wash. Gladys Graupner

FIFTEEN YEARS

253. Ravenswood High School, Ravenswood, W. Va. Mrs. H. Hutchinson, Clara Tucker
254. Durfee High School, Fall River, Mass. Barbara Wellington
255. Cannelton High School, Cannelton, Ind. Mrs. Mildred Vaughn
256. Twin Falls High School, Twin Falls, Ida. Elaine Fisher
257. Senior High School, Hazelton, Penna. Marian Brown
258. Ensley High School, Birmingham, Ala. Florence Pass
259. Canton High School, Canton, N. Y. Mrs. Hugh Williams
260. Big Creek High School, War, W. Va. Harrylee Utz
261. Fairmont High School, Fairmont, Minn. Virginia Dritley
266. Sacramento High School, Sacramento, Calif. Cora Wandrey
267. Cheney High School, Cheney, Wash. Leone Webber
272. Hibbing High School, Hibbing, Minn. Gerald Phillips
275. Victory High School, Clarksburg, W. Va. Helen Xenakis
276. Mineola High School, Mineola, N. Y. Jane Austen

OUR THANKS

WHATEVER measure of success comes to an organization is due largely to the efforts of many people. In this respect The National Thespian Society has been exceedingly fortunate. From its very beginning, the Society has been the recipient of help and encouragement from many persons throughout the country and from abroad — from students, teachers, school administrators, college and university directors, and from leaders of the stage, screen and radio. It is only proper therefore, that on this, the occasion of our twentieth anniversary, we who constitute the Board of Trustees and National Council express our thanks and gratitude to all persons who have in any way whatsoever rendered service. Space does not permit us to mention the names of all these good friends. We must satisfy ourselves with a mere listing of the various groups to which they belong, as follows:

- The Regional Directors who have gone out of their way to assume added duties to promote the work of the Society.
- The Troupe Sponsors who have given, and continue to give, of their time and energy to the maintenance of Thespian groups in the various schools.
- The Thespian students who have put forth the required effort to attain the privilege of membership in the Society.
- The School Administrators who have made possible the organization of Thespian Troupes within their schools.
- The Contributors to **DRAMATICS**, whose articles and other materials have done much to improve the quality of dramatics in the secondary schools.
- The College and University Directors who have gone out of their way to help the Society carry on with its program through drama festivals, clinics, and conferences.
- The Friends whose congratulatory messages we publish in this issue, for their compliments and kind wishes.
- The Office Help, Printers, Engravers, and others upon whose help we have depended so heavily for materials and services.

To all of these friends, to all of you, we say **THANK YOU!**

Board of Trustees:

Paul F. Opp
Earl W. Blank
Harry T. Leeper (Secretary)

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Barbara Wellington, National Director
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Ernest Bavely, Secretary and Treasurer
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For twenty years the National Thespian Society has performed an outstanding service in the great work of pioneering a true people's theatre for this great America of ours. This dream is being realized and your part has been large. The University of Miami Drama Department sends its sincere thanks and congratulations on this your twentieth birthday.—Fred Koch, Jr, Chairman, Drama Department.

Best wishes of the Virginia high schools for continuing growth in your services to the educational theatre.—Richard R. Fletcher, Executive Secretary, Virginia High School League.

Congratulations on the completion of twenty years of outstanding service to the educational theatre of America. You may well be proud of your fine record of achievement. Our very best wishes to the Society and its **DRAMATICS** magazine for an equally successful continuance of your work into the future years. — Theodore Fuchs, Northwestern University Theatre.

My sincerest congratulations on your twenty years of achievement in promoting better work in dramatic arts in the secondary schools.—E. C. Mabie, Head, Department of Speech, State University of Iowa.



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Showboat Theatre at its Best

By G. HARRY WRIGHT

Department of Drama, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

EARLY in his showboat career Captain French adopted for the NEW SENSATION the motto, "Always Good - Better Than Ever." He lived up to that slogan until the day of his death. Each season his company grew larger and his acts better; each season he ventured upon new streams and penetrated farther up the old ones; and each showboat that he built or bought was larger, and more comfortable than those which had preceded it. It is no exaggeration to say that Captain French not only founded the showboat in every step in its development, and institution, but he also led the way in the later days when competitors and imitators were many, he still held his own as the most advanced and reliable showman on the river. It was only after his death that the showboat grew into something bigger and finer than he had known.

On his fourth tour to the south Captain French left the Mississippi at Donaldsonville, Louisiana, and entered the Bayou LaFourche for the first time. The bayous are small, sluggish streams that branch off from the lower Mississippi, Red, and other southern rivers, meander through the low swamp lands of Louisiana, and finally find their devious ways to the Gulf of Mexico. The people living along the bayous are largely of French descent, and in some localities to this day they speak very little English. Their language varies from pure French to a corrupted version of that language known as "cajun".

The lower bayou country then as now was the center of the sugar cane raising and grinding industry, and the people were fairly prosperous, especially at grinding season. Roads and railroads were few, and the bayous were the principal avenues of communication and

This is the fourth article by Professor Wright on the history of Showboat theatre in America. In this issue Professor Wright brings to a close the amazing story of the founders of showboat theatre, Augustus Byron French and his wife Callie. Other developments in showboat entertainment which occurred after 1880 will be discussed in the remaining articles of this series. — EDITOR

transport. It was not strange, therefore, that Captain French found this section highly profitable. The showboat could go where other types of shows could not penetrate, and for several decades the bayous were the finest territory on the entire showboat itinerary.

In the spring of 1882 Captain French had the NEW SENSATION towed all the way up to Pittsburgh, five hundred miles farther north than he had ever been before. After outfitting and organizing a new show, he was towed to Rice's Landing on the Monongahela River, where he opened the season in April. Thus he added a new river to his territory and began the practice of opening in the north in the springtime, instead of in the south in the fall. In 1884 he ventured briefly into the Youghiogheny River, a tributary of the Monongahela, and in 1885 he played the Kananwha River in West Virginia for the first time.

In 1882 the NEW SENSATION, floating down the Ohio past St. Marys, West Virginia, was caught in a violent wind-storm and blown into a tiny shantyboat moored at the shore. Captain French landed and went back to find out how

Sincere congratulations on your twentieth anniversary, and best wishes for your continued success in furthering high standards in secondary school dramatics. — Mildred Streeter, Zeta Phi Eta Fraternity for Women.

seriously the other boat had been damaged. The shantyboat turned out to be a floating photograph gallery namer the SILVAN GLEN, owned by E. A. Price. The two men became friends and partners.

The two boats were lashed together and floated down the river, stopping at landings where Price took tintypes during the day and French gave shows at night. The profits were divided. The partnership was not permanent, however. Price would sell his interest in the SENSATION back to French when business was bad, only to buy in again when things looked better. This continued for several years until, in 1885, French finally refused to resume partnership with Price. The next year Price built his own showboat, and from that time on the two were bitter rivals.

In 1884, while French and Price were working together, they laid the SENSATION up at Paducah and continued on to New Orleans aboard the SILVAN GLEN to attend the Cotton Exposition. At Vidalia, Louisiana, they tied up for the night and crossed the river to Natchez, Mississippi, to see a circus. There was an acrobat and tuba player in the circus whose superior skill and talent attracted Captain French's attention. With his quick showman's instinct, the Captain contacted the man after the performance, and engaged him to join the NEW SENSATION at Pittsburgh the following spring.

So in May, 1885, John E. McNair came aboard at Pittsburgh, and from that time on the names of French and McNair were inseparable. McNair joined as acrobat and tuba player, but during the next twenty years he became piano player, trombone player, deck hand, black-face comedian, carpenter, fireman, engineer, pilot, and finally manager and half owner.

That year, 1885, when the SENSATION reached Louisville, Captain French bought a tiny steam tug, the MARTIN J. MURPHY, and John McNair obtained an engineer's license. From then on things became easier. The MURPHY was not strong enough to push the SENSATION upstream, but she could maneuver into and away from landings and around obstructions, and she could increase the downstream speed.

The next year, 1886, while playing Bayou Lafourche, Captain French bought a larger and more powerful tug, the SENTINEL at Donaldsonville. He traded the MURPHY in on her, giving \$350 "to boot".

In the spring of 1887 Captain French organized in Pittsburgh as usual, and opened his show on the Monongahela. By now the SENSATION had struggled through nine rough seasons, and the battering of wind, current, ice, and rocks had begun to tell. She was leaking badly, and was no longer seaworthy. It was long past time for a new boat. So, after giving his last performance at Augusta, Kentucky, Captain French headed his creaking craft for Cincinnati. There, at the same spot where he had



This picture shows French's NEW SENEATION No. 1 (the Breidenbaugh boat) with her tow-boat tied up at a river landing. The band is gathered on the bank ready for the parade through the town, which will include a free concert on the main corner.

My sincere congratulations to you on your twentieth birthday. Your work in fostering high standards of theatrical deserves great praise. All university and productions in the many high schools community theatres are coming to depend more and more on well trained high school students. May your organization prosper and thrive.—Homer N. Abegglen, Director, Miami University Theatre.

built his first boat, he built a new **NEW SENSATION.**

This second boat was larger than the first, and boasted better appointments. She was 110 feet long and 18 feet wide. Like the original **SENSATION** she had only a single deck, but there was a "Texas", or small deck above where the company had quarters. On top of this was an ornamented pilot house. Inside, there were opera chairs—150 of them—instead of the rude benches of the first boat, and the stage had real painted drops and wing flats for scenery. The windows were ornamented with cathedral glass.

This boat carried on its roof the first showboat calliope, an instrument consisting of a series of steam whistles of graduated pitches connected by wires with an abridged piano keyboard. A pipe carried steam from the towboat to the whistles, and when the keys were depressed by a skilled player, music would result which made up in loudness for what it lacked in tonal quality and smoothness. With favorable atmospheric conditions, the calliope could be heard for several miles. Callie French was the only person aboard who could play the calliope, and in the early days her repertoire was limited to two tunes—"Blue Alsatian Mountains" and "Cricket on the Hearth". The calliope on the second **NEW SENSATION** was made in Cincinnati from patterns fashioned by John McNair.

The new showboat, together with the **SENTINEL** left Cincinnati on December 6, 1887. Before she closed her season at Port Allen, Louisiana, on May 21, 1888, she had played not only the lower Ohio, the Mississippi to New Orleans, and Bayou Lafourche, but had penetrated as well into the fabulous Bayou Teche.

Here was golden country indeed, well worth the trouble of reaching it. At fish and oyster camps, sugar mills, and at the lovely little cities, some of the most beautiful in America, the **SENSATION** did thriving business. Upstream to Franklin, Baldwin, Jeanerette, New Iberia, on up to St. Martinville in the legend-drenched Evangeline country, the Frenches and the McNairs carried the showboat entertainment that these isolated people were so anxious to see. The average gate receipts in the Teche were the highest in the history of the showboat up to that time.

It may be well right here to say something about the McNairs, because so far we have mentioned only one of them. Two or three seasons before John McNair joined the **SENSATION**, a very young girl named Ida Fitch came aboard with her father. The father worked for Captain French, but



Four scenes from showboat theatre entertainment as given to enthusiastic audiences by Captain French and his thespians of a half a century ago.

at first Ida was along just for the ride. Gradually she worked herself into the routine of the boat, assuming a few housekeeping duties, and even helping Captain French with his magic act when Mrs. French was ill.

Congratulations to The National Thespian Society on its twentieth birthday. May the next twenty years be as productive as the past. All good wishes.—Henry Boettcher, Head, Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute of Technology.

Ida Fitch and John McNair were married in the Frenches' room on the **SENSATION** at Darrowville, Louisiana, on the story night of May 11, 1886, while the boat lay tied to the bank, windbound. Ida was just 15 years of age at the time. Ida McNair's importance in the show soon began to grow. First she was given parts in the minstrel opening and the afterpiece, and the task of understudying all the female

(Continued on page 18)

The outstanding comedy success is. We Shook The Family Tree

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You'll get a shower of laughs when you shake this family tree. The instant and enthusiastic reaction to this exceptional comedy has zoomed it right up to the top in popularity. In addition to its grand humor and "playability", it has real quality too. The play is based on Hildegard Dolson's worthwhile novel published by Random House, and then in part in *The Reader's Digest*. Perry Clark, who dramatized the other new hit *MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS*, prepared this bright new comedy. The action is rapid, the roles engaging, and the lines often uproarious.

The story of the play

Hildegard is desperately anxious to attract the attention of some eligible senior, for it's almost Saturday night, and no boy has even hinted that he'd like to take her to the big dance. She wins the school debate with an impassioned plea against drinking, but instead of attracting boys with her brains, she only convinces everyone that her father must be a terrible drunkard. As Hildegard appeals to her mother for help, the phone starts ringing, with sympathetic women asking whether Father beats them all very often, and suggesting that he might be sent to Alcoholics Anonymous. Despite Mother's horror at these growing wild stories about her abstemious husband, she's moved by Hildegard's fear that if she misses this

prom, it's the beginning of the end—and that the final result will be a lonely old spinster. And when the more popular girls start to lord it over Hildegard, Mother takes action. She knows a nice boy, and she's sure he'd love to go with Hildegard. Mother has to phone his mother anyway. Hildegard is in ecstasy at the thought, and though she doesn't know the boy's name, can't resist getting back a little at these popular girls. With her vivid imagination Hildegard lays it on thick—and the result sounds better than the most admired Hollywood star—Poor Hildegard! How could she know that her mother would pick Freddie—the one boy in school whose old-fashioned parents force him to wear knickers! He's a swell guy, but those short pants make him the joke of the school. In a screamingly funny scene, Hildegard finds out the truth in front of everyone. She pleads with her father to let her break the date, but Father is mad, for everyone is convinced that he's a great drinker. Furthermore, Freddie's the son of Father's boss. That settles it—Hildegard can expect no mercy from her folks, and she's in despair. The whole school is getting ready to die laughing. She reads an ad about Beauty Mud—a substance which will work a miracle on her skin—so she gets some in hopes that her fatal beauty will cause a stag-line stampede. Meanwhile, Father, in danger of losing his job at the bank because of all the talk Hildegard has started, invites his boss out to the house to see for himself how sane and sensible his family really is. As Father tries to prove this, Hildegard, her face smeared with Beauty Clay, dashes screaming into the room. (Her fisherman brother has parked a large live bass in the bathtub.) The boss is stunned. Then his son Freddie, goaded earlier by Hildegard, bursts in wearing long pants. He's taken them from her brother. The brother rushes in after him—(wearing Freddie's knickers) and crying, "Steal my pants, will you?" tackles Father's boss by mistake. It looks like the end of everything, and they all turn on Hildegard, for one way or another—she's at the bottom of every single disaster. But in a laughter-filled whirlwind finish, the happy solution is reached that not only solves Hildegard's problem (and Freddie's too) but will leave your audience chuckling for days.



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MRS. H. OLSON,
New York City, N. Y.

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THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

(Continued from page 15)

parts. Then, since she was an accomplished artist, she began designing and making costumes and planning the specialties. At one time she worked up a juggling act of her own. In time she became stage manager, a job comparable to a combination of producer and director today, charged with the responsibility of criticising and passing on the new acts, creating song and dance routines, conducting rehearsals, and planning the entire show.

Two daughters, Frenchie and Clarkie, were born to John and Ida. They, too, became stage performers as soon as they could toddle, and the four McNairs remained indispensable parts of the French organization until the end.

During the years in which he was opening up new territory and improving his boats, Captain French was also developing his technique of showmanship. In the very early days, advance billing was impossible, because there was no reliable way of getting an advance man from town to town ahead of the boat. Moreover, fog, wind, and ice made navigation by a power-less boat so uncertain that nobody could say for sure when the SENSATION would reach a town, or whether or not she would be able to land when she got there.

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When the boat did make a landing, somebody would beat a big bass drum on the top deck to attract townspeople, and sometimes members of the company would go through the town and out into the country on foot to advertise the show. Early companies consisted of only six to eight performers. A piano and a dulcimer were the only musical instruments, and these could not be used for outdoor advertising.

Later, with a company doubled in size, Captain French had more musicians, and it was possible to organize a fife and drum corps which tramped the river roads in the daytime and performed on the top deck before curtain time in the evening to advertise the show. By now the show on the boat had been augmented by Sid Allen, the acrobat, a cornetist, and a violin player, as well as by new singers and dancers. Soon a small cannon was mounted on the top deck, and its loud boom would announce to everybody for miles around that FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION was in town. The story is told that on one occasion Sid Allen, whose duty it was to fire off the cannon, turned the muzzle in the wrong direction and blew a hole in the smokestack of the tug.

The season of 1882 brought several innovations. The cannon was still in use, but the fife and drum corps had been discarded and in its place Captain French had a small brass band. As the SENSATION approached a landing, the playing of the band and the roar of the cannon would bring farmers and townspeople to the river. After the landing had been made, the band would parade through the town and announcements would be made through a large megaphone. Sometimes Captain French would rent a wagon and team and take the band out into the country or to a neighboring town.

This season saw too, the inauguration of the evening outdoor free show. A rope was stretched between the two masts on top of the SENSATION. Shortly before time for the main show indoors, the cannon would be fired several times and the band would play to gather a crowd. Then Mrs. French would appear made up as a comic old lady, and walk the rope, chirping a song at the same time. Next, Sid Allen would perform all sorts of daring feats in the air, ending up by standing on his head on the rope. From a crosspiece extending out from one of the masts a trapeze was hung, and a performance would be given here also. On particularly dark nights men holding torches would walk beneath the performers to light up the act. The crowd, its appetite thus whetted, would throng to the box office at the conclusion of the free show to buy tickets for the main show inside.

After he purchased his first tug, Captain French could do effective advance advertising. It was possible to state exactly now, when the SENSATION would reach a certain town, and the tug itself could be unfastened from the showboat and taken to the next town to post bills and to make arrangements for the SENSATION'S coming.

When the second NEW SENSATION opened the 1888 season she carried a company of twenty-four persons and an advance man who went ahead of the boat regularly on a high-wheeled bicycle, taking bills to the towns where the boat was to play and to the settlements back several miles from the river. By now Captain French had an outfit and a routine which set the pattern for all of the showboats that were to follow. He followed a set schedule and had a regular system of advance advertising; he had a steam calliope, and a brass band which paraded daily; he had an orchestra and a first-class variety show. A listing in his log of the acts of his bill at about this time shows nineteen acts, including a minstrel opening and an afterpiece farce by the entire company.

In 1890 Captain C. F. Breidinbaugh of Hawesville, Kentucky, built the largest and most ornate showboat that had ever been seen up to that time. She was double-decked throughout, 130 feet long and 28 feet wide, and seated 650 persons in a decorative auditorium which extended through both decks and had a balcony. The outside was literally covered with wooden "gingerbread", and surmounted by an octagonal pilot house. Breidinbaugh named his new show boat the THEATORIUM, and operated her for a single season at the end of which time he failed. French bought the boat and promptly renamed her FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION. At the same time he sold his own old boat to Orke, McNair, and Armstrong. They changed her name to the VOYAGER, and operated her for two seasons. Then the McNairs rejoined the Frenches.

Captain French was soon to acquire still another showboat. In 1883 Eugene Robinson, a capitalist of New Orleans, had two large boats built at Jeffersonville, Indiana. One was a freak Museum boat, and the other a theatre boat. He called them both FLOATING PALACE, and they traveled together. In 1894 Robinson's venture failed, and Captain French bought the theatre boat at public sale. She was a large, double-deck boat seating over 700 persons.

Now Captain French had two fine large boats. He wanted to keep both of them. They could not both have identical names, yet it was unthinkable to call a French boat anything but the NEW SENSATION. Besides, who would operate the second boat? Captain French solved both problems easily. He called the Breidenbaugh boat NEW SENSATION NO. 1, and gave her to Callie to operate. The Robinson boat he called NEW SENSATION NO. 2, and operated her himself. The McNairs, father, mother, and two daughters, also divided between the two boats. Needless to say, there was constant shifting about, but among them the Frenches and the McNairs operated the two fine boats with outstanding success until 1900.

New territory in the meantime had been opened up. About 1890 the Frenches went up the Illinois River for the first time, and later they ascended the Mississippi to Prairie du Chein, Wisconsin.

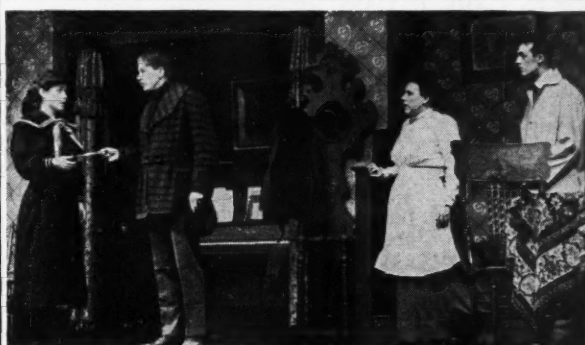
What of competition? Was French the only showman on the rivers during all of this time. Not quite. As early as 1881 small rival boats appeared, but they failed quickly and went out of existence. Breidenbaugh and Robinson offered some competition for a time, but they too failed, and French acquired their boats. Only Price persisted. From the time he came out with PRICE'S FLOATING OPERA in 1886, Price was successful, and was a constant thorn in the side of Captain French. Never quite able to equal French's show, the redoubtable little man nevertheless grew and made money, and continued in the showboat business for more than a quarter of a century after Captain French's death.

In 1900, with his health failing, Captain French decided to give up showboating for a while, and to make a tour of Europe with Callie. He sold the SENSATION No. 1 to Captain Price and leased SENSATION No. 2 to Captain McNair. The European tour completed, Captain French and Callie arrived back in America to be greeted with the news that the SENSATION No. 2 had burned to the water's edge at Elmwood Landing, Louisiana.

Now for the first time since 1878 Captain French found himself without a showboat. He began at once to make plans to build a boat larger and finer than any that had gone before. He contracted with the Taylor Shipyards at Higginsport, Ohio, to do the work. Illness overtook him, however, and he went to his home in Columbia, Alabama, leaving Captain John McNair to superintend the building of the boat.

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Captain McNair finished the boat, the fifth and last FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION, and got her out ahead of ice late in 1901. He finished the season in the south, took tow to Pittsburgh in the spring, organized a show, and prepared to open the 1902 season on the Monongahela.

Captain French and Callie started north to look the new boat over, but got only as far as Cincinnati when the Captain's last sickness overtook him. He died there on May 8, 1902, on the very night that the NEW SENSATION gave the first performance of the season near Charleroi, Pennsylvania.

Callie French and John and Ida McNair operated FRENCH'S NEW SENSATION until 1907, when they decided to sell out and retire. One night on the Illinois River the WATER QUEEN

with Captain Price aboard, pulled up alongside the NEW SENSATION and the papers were signed which sold the French boat to Price. Then the WATER QUEEN cancelled her show for the night and everybody went over on the SENSATION to see the last French performance.

Callie French and the McNairs went to their home in Alabama, where Callie died in 1935. John and Ida McNair, Clarkie and children of later generations, are still living on the old plantation. So far as is known, they are the only living persons who lived and worked on America's first showboat.

So ends the saga of the Frenches, who founded the American showboat, and of the McNairs, who fought by their sides against wind, ice, and human frailty, to make of the showboat something fine and worth remembering.

Increasing Age with Make-up

By CARL B. CASS

School of Drama, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma

IN the amateur theatre, the commonest and most difficult function of character make-up is that of adding an impression of age to an actor's appearance. In the school theatre particularly, it is necessary to suggest increased age by means of make-up for practically every play produced. Unskillful attempts to give an impression of advanced age account for more horrible examples of character make-up than anything else. In fact, the usual method of attempting to suggest age by means of black (or nearly black) lines for wrinkles and parallel white (or nearly white) lines for highlights has become a familiar stereotype which resembles nothing human. Yet this stereotyped method is imitated by hundreds of amateurs with apparently no thought for any natural illusion.

First Lesson

The only intelligent way to begin a study of the methods of aging an actor by means of make-up is to examine carefully a number of people of various ages for the purpose of determining exactly how an impression of age is actually communicated to the eye.

Procedure — This lesson will be most effective as a group study project, because the process of comparing the results of observations will be very instructive. If handled as a group project, the same five men and five women of various ages ranging from about thirty-five to eighty or more should be assigned for observation to all members of the group. The student observers should be instructed to study each person carefully at distances of from thirty to sixty feet, because such a range of distance represents the approximate average of distances at which an audience sees an actor on the stage. At a specified time each member of the group should submit in writing a report showing the results of his observations of all the people as signed. The form of all reports should be standardized to permit comparison. The following form might be used as a checklist which will simplify the making of such reports.

- Name of student observer _____
 Name of person observed _____
 Estimated age of person observed _____
 Check each of the following items which gives you a discernible impression of age:
1. Bodily structure or figure _____
 2. Bodily posture — sitting or standing _____
 3. Speed and manner of walking or moving _____
 4. Style, color, and manner of wearing clothes _____
 5. Color, amount, cut, and manner of dressing hair _____
 6. Shape, complexion, and contours of the face _____
 7. Number and depth of discernible wrinkles _____

8. Special indications — moustache, beard, eyeglasses, etc.

List in order of importance the three most easily discernible indicators of age and describe each briefly.

A comparison of the completed reports should indicate the approximate accuracy of the observations and furnish an interesting basis for group discussion. Out of such a discussion should come the answers to such questions as — Do all mature and elderly people show the same indications of age? What indications of age are the most obvious and the most frequent? Do different individuals vary noticeably in the manner of showing their ages? Do men and women differ in the manner of showing their ages?

If the student reports are too inconsistent to indicate any general conclusions, and if the discussion following, results only in argument and unpromising disagreements, the study should be repeated. If the study is repeated, either the same or different people may be assigned for observation. For students of make-up the ability to observe accurately is very important.

An individual, working alone, may benefit from carefully and systematically observing men and women of various ages in an attempt to discover for himself what are the most frequent and obvious indicators of age.

However this study is conducted, it should serve as a sort of orientation to the general problem of aging an actor's appearance with make-up. It should show each student that the process of aging the appearance of an actor should not be simply a stereotyped manner of drawing wrinkles on the face, but rather a process that must be adapted to the individual actor and one that may be much more far-reaching than that of merely painting the face. In other words, the problem of aging the appearance of various individuals may involve much more than make-up alone, and its solution calls for good judgment and the selection of the most appropriate methods of giving an impression of age in each individual case.

General Considerations in Aging

First, comes the problem of how much should the actor be aged. This will depend not only upon the age of the character he is to impersonate, but also upon how young he appears before he is made up. Some high school students, for example, might easily give an impression of being twenty-five to thirty years old without make-up, while others appear to be four to five years younger than they actually are. It seems obvious, therefore, that if two actors are to be made up to appear to be forty years old on the stage and one appears to be about twelve years old, while the other appears to be about twenty-five, then an identical

method of make-up cannot be employed to age both of them. The make-up needed to make the actor who appears twelve years old to look as though he were forty would probably make the other actor look at least sixty.

The four pictures appearing on the next page are photographs of portraits painted with make-up materials. The same facial outline was used for all these pictures. The approximate ages of the different pictured faces might be given as twenty, forty, sixty, and eighty. These pictures are intended to illustrate various stages in the process of aging a single face by means of make-up; and, in a very general way, they illustrate the methods of aging by means of make-up. But different faces would require different treatments to give similar impressions of age.

Another general problem in aging involves the question of how attractive or well groomed the stage character should appear. It is very much easier, for example, to make up a young girl to look a forty year old hag than it would be to make her look like an attractive fifty year old society matron. The handsome and well bred middle-aged character presents the most difficult problems in make-up, since all effects of dissipation and careless grooming must be avoided.

Specific Considerations in Aging

Proper Basic Colors — Some make-up manufacturers use descriptive names for different grease paint colors. For example, three colors of grease paint on Stein's price list are called "middle age," "sallow old man," and "robust age." The Max Factor price list uses no such names, nor does the Stein's list of soft grease paints which are similar to the Max Factor product. Any student of make-up will do well to ignore completely any descriptive names of grease paints and to learn through experimentation to select and mix colors that will give the proper impression for various ages under different stage conditions.

Here are some suggestions for experimental verification. Appropriate juvenile colors are warm flesh colors and reddish tans; middle age colors tend to be more orange, with slightly less red and more yellow in the mixture; and old age colors take on a slight bluish or grayish tint. It might also be suggested that middle and old age colors are more effective if imperfectly mixed so as to give a slightly mottled or dappled effect. If, for example, you should apply a pale yellowish tan basic color and then apply, with one finger, tiny spots of blue lining color all over the face, you could then blend this blue into the basic color only slightly leaving it somewhat mottled and you would have a basic color that, under favorable conditions, would be very effective for very old age.

Rouge Application — Except when a florid complexion is specifically wanted, less and less rouge should be applied to the cheeks as the age of the character increases. For very advanced ages rouge should seldom be used at all. For middle aged characters all rouge applications should be relatively dark in shade and lower in placement than

for the youthful straight make-up. For a florid complexion, rouge may be applied in tiny dots to the cheeks and nose along with tiny dots of blue or gray; then these two colors may be blended together only enough to give a mottled effect.

Lip rouge should also be of a relatively dark shade and should be used sparingly on middle aged characters, and usually not at all for advanced age. As age advances the lips tend to straighten out in line and become thinner, so they should be made up accordingly.

Highlights and Shadows — The principal effects of age upon the face are suggested by highlights and shadows, which are used to accentuate facial contours. The facial contours to be accented are those that are determined by the bone structure and muscles of the face. Most youthful faces are well upholstered with fatty tissue so that the surface of the skin is smooth and gently rounded. As age advances this fatty tissue either disappears or sags, and the bone and muscle structure becomes more and more apparent.

Highlights are used to make prominent areas of the face more prominent; and shading colors are used to make sunken areas more sunken. Both highlights and shadows must be carefully blended into the basic color. The degrees of contrast between highlights, shadows, and the basic color will depend upon the degree of accent wanted. Generally speaking, however, black or even dark brown is much too dark to be used on anything lighter than a Negro make-up.

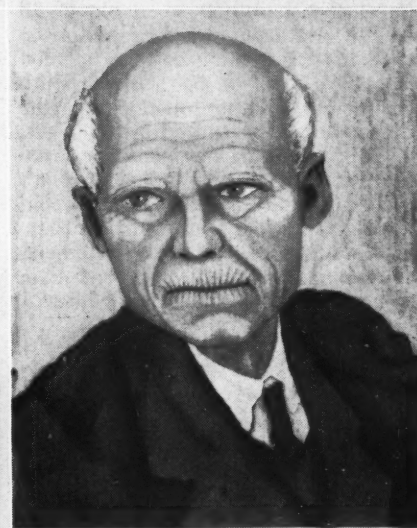
Eye Make-up — The eye shadow and lines on the eyelids are no different from those of the straight make-up, except that the shadows may be darker and more neutral in color to make the eyes seem more sunken; and, for extreme age, the eye lines may be omitted thus making the eyes appear smaller or less apparent. When an actor wishes to play an old character with drooping eyelids, he can accentuate the droop by strongly highlighting the lower parts of the upper lids.

Face Powder Application — Powder is applied to the face in exactly the same manner as described for the straight make-up. When highlights are used, however, it is very important that the powder be at least as light as the highlight color, otherwise the powder application will completely obliterate the highlights.

Hair Make-up — Graying or thinning hair is one of the most apparent indications of advancing age, particularly for men. For women, styles of dressing the hair as well as graying hair are very important in suggesting age.

Hair may be grayed with white face powder, corn starch, chalk dust, or dry aluminum paint as well as with a number of other light colored powders. Max Factor sells a liquid hair whitener; and there are white mascara and white liquid powders such as Stein's "wheatcroft" that may also be used.

Baldness can only be imitated with a wig. Many people are prejudiced against the use



A series of painted make-up portraits illustrating a possible treatment of the same face for the ages of twenty, forty, sixty, and eighty respectively.

of wigs, because of the ratty or artificial appearance of the cheap wigs with which they are acquainted. Good wigs, however, that can be rented from any reputable wig maker, are excellent aids to character make-up.

Second Lesson

Objective — To gain practice in the application of make-up for the suggestion of age by attempting to gain the impression of extreme age without applying any wrinkles. Wrinkles, after all, are merely a finishing effect that add very little to the general impression of age. Students invariably tend to over emphasize wrinkles and under emphasize facial contours, unless forced to strive for the effect of age without wrinkles.

Procedure — First, try to discover an effective basic color — perhaps a pale, slightly yellowed base subtly mottled with gray or blue. After a satisfactory basic color has been found and applied put on a white or very pale grease paint on all prominent areas of the face such as the bridge of the nose,

the cheek bones, the muscles above the depressions extending from the sides of the nose towards the corners of the mouth, the point of the chin, etc. Blend these highlights carefully, leaving no discernible lines of color contrast. Repeatedly test your results by backing ten feet or more away from your mirror to see if the color contrast is strong enough to carry and not so strong as to appear artificial.

Next, try to find a shading color which will blend well with the basic color — perhaps gray darkened with just a touch of brown or dark red will be effective. Then apply this shading color to all sunken areas of the face with a finger, a tiny camel's hair brush, or a paper stomp. Such sunken areas are the hollows of the cheeks (except on very full faces), the rounded depressions under the eyes, the depressions extending from nostrils towards the corners of the mouth, the areas under the brows, between the lower lip and the chin, etc. Blend these shadows carefully and repeatedly check them at some distance from your mirror.

(The next make-up article in this series will be concerned with other types of character make-up, and it will include a discussion of the uses of nose putty and crepe hair.)

THEATRE ON BROADWAY

By PAUL MYERS

Theatre Collection, New York Public Library
New York 18, N. Y.

Readers of this magazine may order tickets for Broadway plays through Mr. Myers. Request should be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THE theatre season 1948-49 has just passed the half-way mark and the picture is far from encouraging. The costs are skyrocketing; the funds to cover these costs ever more difficult to come by. More and more theatres in that precious half-mile of midtown New York, which the American commercial theatre has all but confined itself to, are being claimed by the cinema, radio and television. This is partially the theatre's fault for even now, at the peak of the season, it is unable to fill even the relatively few theatres left to it. To meet the rising costs, admission prices have had to be raised. With each increase, larger sections of the audience are being turned away. Thus, instead of nurturing new audiences, the theatre is discouraging its already established public. All of these are old complaints, but it is well to review them from time to time, and, at the moment, they are more grimly apparent than they have been for some little while.

Anne of the Thousand Days

In spite of everything, a few new things do continue to come along and some of them are most interesting. Maxwell Anderson, one of the American theatre's most distinguished dramatists, has contributed the outstanding new play of the current season. In the early '30s Mr. Anderson turned his attention to a fascinating period in the history of Great Britain. His *Elizabeth the Queen* and *Mary of Scotland* were, and have continued to be, resounding successes. For his new play, *Anne of the Thousand Days*, Mr. Anderson has once again turned to the chronicles of England's sixteenth century royalty. The lady of his title is Anne Boleyn, and the period of time is the thousand days during which she exerted an influence over King Henry VIII. The opening of the play discloses the Anne in her prison cell awaiting execution. As she begins to relate her story, the play — through flashback technique — enacts the principal events of her short reign as Henry's Queen.

The Henry VIII of Mr. Anderson's play (and of Rex Harrison's brilliant portrayal) is the not blustering, beefy monarch made familiar to us by the screen characterization of Charles Laughton. He is suave and cultured. He has the graces becoming the courtier (which he must have been) and the charms which he must have possessed to make so many ladies risk matrimony with him. He is learned, witty, aware of his own shortcomings but willful and self-

confident enough to put almost any scheme through. Though Mr. Harrison lacks the physical bulk we have come to expect of Henry VIII; he looks every inch the Tudor monarch.

A word must be spoken for the language of the play. It is written in a verse form but it is not the lyrical verse of WINTERSET. It borrows something from the quality of Shakespeare's chronicle, but it bears closer resemblance to the contemporary theatre.

Yoyce Redman, whose Doll Tearsheet in the Old Vic company's presentation of *King Henry IV* so impressed us a few seasons ago, appears as Anne Boleyn. She lacks the stature necessary for the part—both in appearance and in speech. The quieter passages are more faithfully rendered than those in which she must express great passion. H. C. Potter has directed a top-notch cast. *Anne of the Thousand Days* is my choice, thus far along in the season, for the drama awards.

Red Gloves

Jean-Paul Sartre, who has created as much stir in local theatrical activity as he has abroad and in philosophical circles, is currently represented by two new plays. New Stages is presenting his *Les Morts Sans Sépultures* in a Thornton Wilder adaptation as *The Victims*. I have not been able to get to this recently opened production as yet, but I have seen M. Sartre's *Les Mains Sales*, which Jean Dalrymple is presenting at the Mansfield Theatre in an adaptation by Daniel Taradash as *Red Gloves*. The adaptation has not, it is feared, done the original play justice. The same play is currently showing in London, in still another translation, as *Crime Passionnel*. From what one can learn of the two European production of the play, one gathers that the version now playing in New York falls short of both. It is not the serious political treatise of the original, nor the melodra-

matic thriller which is the London offering.

RED GLOVES tells of the assassination of the leader of the Communist party of a middle European country by one of the young idealists of the party. Hugo feels that Hoederer is mis-directing the policies of the party and undertakes the assignment of ridding the party of its leader. He takes a post as secretary to Hoederer, and one sees how he goes about the accomplishment of his task. A lot of rather hollow sounding dialogue is expended as the duty of a socially-minded individual in the contemporary world toward his family and his fellows. It all lacks humanity and feeling. M. Sartre has tried to curtail the American showings and charges that his script has been made to sound anti-Communist. Putting aside all consideration of a political nature (though the play's politics are principally confused); RED GLOVES main lack is red blood in the characters.

Charles Boyer is making his first American stage appearance as Hoederer and is a most impressive theatre actor. It is hoped that in the future he will divide his time between stage and screen more equitably. John Dall plays Hugo and Joan Tetzel enacts the role of Hugo's politically unsympathetic wife. Jed Harris has directed; settings by Stewart Chaney.

Lend An Ear

Let us set a different note for a bit and turn to *Lend An Ear*, one of the gayest revues to hit the town in some time. In the tradition of the various *New Faces*, *Meet the People* and the more recent *Small Wonder*, the new offering had already won the approval of West Coast audiences before coming to the National Theatre just before Christmas. Entirely the work of Charles Gaynor, the production boasts few established name players. William Eythe is the only widely known member of the cast, but several of the others have been noticed by the more acutely interested of the theatre audience.

In the course of its gayety, the revue amusingly spoofs many facets of contemporary life. Gossip columnists, the operettas of the '20s, calypso music, the silent films and their vocal descendants and pseudo-psychotherapy are all given a reviewing. In its less biting mood, LEND AN EAR, evokes all of the nostalgia of our teens in Friday Dancing Class — a revisiting of the scene of so many of our memories of that period in our growth. This "number" is the high spot in Gower Champion's choreography. LEND AN EAR is in the theatre's best carnival mood.

The Madwoman of Chaillot

Another adaptation from the French has recently come our way and it is a more creditable piece of work than *Red Gloves*. Maurice Valency, of the staff of the dramatic arts department at Columbia University has beautifully recreated Jean Giraudoux' *The Madwoman of Chaillot*. It was most valiant of Alfred de Liagre, Jr. to risk production of this play. It is the type of

\$500 Cash Award

The Repertoire Little Theatre, 16 Tenth Street, Toledo, Ohio, will award a cash prize of \$500.00 to the author or co-authors of an original full-length play chosen by a Jury of Awards, with the contest closing at midnight on June 15, 1949. Translations, adaptations or modifications of any published material will be automatically disqualified. No musical plays will be considered. Further particulars concerning this contest may be obtained from the Repertoire Little Theatre at the address indicated above.



Scene from *Anne of the Thousand Days*, by Maxwell Anderson, with Percy and Joyce Redman. Directed by H. C. Potter. Settings by Jo Melzinger. (Photograph by John Swope).

script which demands expert production. The least amount of mishandling would have completely marred the play's chances of success. Then, too, it requires expert casting — all of the parts being important. Everyone involved is to be commended for an expert job.

The play is an acid commentary on our mores. It is a time-honored literary device to make the mad seem the most sane. It is a trick employed by almost all of the great satirists. In Giraudoux' play those whom the world considers sane are plotting its overthrow. They are the financiers, the industrialists and the scientists. The madwomen and their sympathizers think that there is still some beauty left in the world, some place for romance and that the common people should have a wealthy heritage.

The first act is set on the terrace before a Paris cafe. During it one meets the powerful of the world and overhears their great scheme. In the second act, set in the cellar of the madwoman of Chaillot — the Countess Aurellia, we see these great people trapped. The opening of the scene is one of the bits of theatre one would like to see again and again. The Countess receives her friends, Mme. Constance (the madwoman of Passy), Mlle. Gabrielle (the madwoman of St. Sulpice) and Mme. Josephine (the madwoman of La Concorde). As played by Martita Hunt, Estelle Winwood, Lydia Westman and Doris Rich, the scene is a gem of stagecraft. Most of the leading drama critics have had the perspicacity to hail *THE MADWOMAN OF CHAILLOT* and it is hoped that audiences will repay the daring of those responsible for this brilliant production.

Light up the Sky

Moss Hart has once again attested his love of the theatre and its people with *Light up the Sky*. The title is derived from a line in *The Idle Jester*: "Mad, sire? Ah, yes — mad indeed, but observe how they light up the sky." The "they" of the quote refers to those people of the theatre who almost completely inhabit Mr. Hart's play.

The action of the play takes place during a period of time surrounding the Boston premiere of a new play. Into the star's suite at the Ritz-Carlton in the Massachusetts capital flock the producer, the director, most of the cast and its hangers-on and a multitude of miscellaneous characters. Most of the play is farce-comedy, but some of it is trenchant commentary on the birth pangs of a new play. He expresses the hope, the despair, the futility and the final gratification that attend all such events. It was my privilege last summer to attend a Boston premiere of an ill-fated musical and all of these features were apparent in the Shubert Theatre that evening.

A big cast of established favorites speak Moss Hart's lines just as he must have wanted them spoken, for Mr. Hart has also directed the production. Sam Leverage, Virginia Field, Glenn Anders, Audrey Christie, Philip Ober are only a few of this stellar cast.

Heartiest congratulations on your many fine achievements during your first twenty years! I know your future will be as bright as your past has been.— Monroe Lipman, President, The National Collegiate Players.

Goodbye, My Fancy

The Kanin family has added another laurel to its recent theatre achievements. Though Ruth Gordon's *The Leading Lady* failed to win success a bit earlier in the season, her husband's *Born Yesterday* continues to entertain eight capacity audiences each week at the Henry Miller Theatre. Now, Fay Kanin, the wife of Carson's brother, Michael, has written another of the Broadway scene's most popular hits. It is *Goodbye, My Fancy* and in it Madeleine Carroll is proving her abilities as a stage actress. As a person of world-wide reputation who returns to her alma mater (from which she had been expelled) to receive an honorary degree, Miss Carroll is brilliant. Her expulsion had been caused by an episode involving a professor, who is now the college's president. It is the lady's hope to revive the romance but she finds that the passing years have made a great difference. He is no longer the crusading idealist and, before the play's conclusion this becomes apparent all too cruelly.

The play is, on the whole, keyed for comedy playing. As in her brother-in-law's *BORN YESTERDAY*, Mrs. Kanin combines good farce comedy with sound philosophy and reflection. In addition to Miss Carroll, the cast includes Conrad Nagel, Shirley Booth and Sam Wanamaker directed the production; Donald Oenslager executed the decor.

Space does not allow for adequate discussion of the Benjamin Britten opera, *The Rape of Lucretia*, which has been staged in toto by Agnes de Mille; Robert E. McEnroe's *The Silver Whistle*, which affords Jose Ferrer one of the best opportunities of his very showy career and the disappointing *Bravo* of Edna Ferber and George S. Kaufman. The principal character of the latter was derived from the person of Ferenc Molnar and depicts his career and that of his confreres since coming to America. A great deal more was hoped for than was delivered. Oscar Homolka played the role of the dramatist brilliantly, but the script abounded in weaknesses which deprived it of its anticipated success.

I hope for space, too, in an early article to point out some of the ills of the current theatre. It is far from healthy. During the holiday season, I have been privileged to participate in several gatherings of theatre persons. The ills of the theatre are constantly discussed. Those of the theatre are greatly concerned and, I feel, it is time to draw the audience into the diagnoses. Those of us who love this great institution should make one of our new resolves a desire to do our part to pull the theatre out of its present trouble.

THE PLAY OF THE MONTH

Edited by EARL W. BLANK

Director of Dramatics, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky

This department is designed to assist directors, teachers, and students choose, cast and produce plays of recognized merit. Suggestions concerning plays which readers should like to see discussed here will be welcomed by the Department Editor.

Staging WE SHOOK THE FAMILY TREE

(As produced by Thespian Troupe 650 of the Rochester High School, Rochester, Minnesota.)

By BURDETTE E. MOELLER

Director of Dramatics, Rochester High School, Rochester, Minnesota

WE SHOOK THE FAMILY TREE, a comedy in 3 acts, by Perry Clark, adapted from the popular book by Hildegard Dolson and condensed in the book section of the Reader's Digest. One interior setting, with a cast of seven women and five men. Modern costumes. Royalty, \$25.00. Dramatic Publishing Co., 1706 South Prairie Ave., Chicago 16, Illinois.

Suitability

With a running time of only an hour and ten minutes, this play might receive the criticism that it is too short. It does, however, make a good evening's entertainment since it has popular appeal and moves smoothly with sufficient action to maintain interest and carry the plot. The general audience reaction was summed up succinctly by one patron who said, "The time went by so rapidly that I was amazed when the final curtain came." The audience left wanting more because they liked it.

Plot

The action of the play centers around Hildegard Dolson, who doesn't have a date for

the junior-senior prom. To make a small social splash, and thus attract date offers, Hildegard describes her father as a drunk during a high school debate. The nasty word gets around and father's job is threatened. Hildegard still has no date, and her social future is in jeopardy. "It's almost Saturday", she wails desperately, "and no one's even hinted!"

Mom is too helpful. She fixes a date with Mrs. Shermer (the boss's wife) so Freddie Shermer, who wears knickers, will take Hildegard to the prom. Since Freddie is strictly a zombie, what with knickers and all, Hildegard's social life is now definitely ruined.

Meanwhile, Paige Mason, a little neighborhood girl, plays postman with Mr. Dolson's love letters. While the neighbors catch up on Pa Dolson's love life, Mr. Shermer, Dolson's boss at the bank, is catching up on the gossip.

Freddie, the banker's knickered son, is persuaded by Hildegard to revolt and buy a suit. But first he takes a pair of pants away from Bob who pursues Freddie to the Dolson living room, where he mistakes Shermer, Sr. as his quarry and tackles him. The boss and his wife loose their tempers and it appears that Pa Dolson is really in the dog house, until Freddie enters in long pants and reveals that he was responsible for some of the things blamed on Hildegard.

Shermer Sr. concedes defeat by surrendering the keys to the family car. So, Hildegard has a dream boat in tow as she goes to the prom—in a car—and her escort wears long pants.

Casting

Juvenile characters dominate the cast, offering a chance for several young people who have ability but whose size and voice keep them from playing older roles.

Hildegard, Sally, Ellie May and Jill are typical high school girls, full of vitality and interested in attracting the opposite sex. Little Paige Mason, who likes to play postman, is supposed to be a child of seven. We stretched her age a little in order to use a 6th grade girl who had done dramatic work. Although a bit too large for seven, her little-girl dress, hair ribbons and childish actions made her convincing in the part. Tall students were cast in other roles to make Paige look small.

The boys, Bob, Jimmy and Freddie are naturals for high school actors. Select a boy with a likeable personality to play Freddie as the audience must be sympathetic with his problem (his mother insists that he wear knickers).

The four adult roles are not difficult for high school players. The part of Mr. Dolson, however, does require an actor of experience since he must show controlled emotion which gradually builds to an inevitable verbal explosion

BURDETTE E. MOELLER

Born and raised in Iowa, Mr. Moeller attended the Iowa State Teachers College, where he acted in 22 major college productions before graduating in 1934 with a B. A. in Speech and Play Production. He then traveled with a dramatic company for a season and also appeared in vaudeville for a time. He attended the University of Michigan three summers, acted with the Michigan Repertory Players and received his M. A. degree there in 1940. His dramatic experience also includes considerable radio work over stations in Iowa, Michigan and Minnesota. He is now serving his sixth year as teacher and director of speech and dramatics in the Rochester High School.

in the final act. His timing must be just right.

Directing

There are no unusual problems in directing the play. It should start with vitality, and the first act must not bog down before the action of the plot begins. After mother announces who Hildegard's "secret admirer" is, the action of the play pretty well carries itself along.

Rehearsals

The play offers a pleasant relief to "well-worn" directors who are rehearsal fatigued. Each act is so short and the action so rapid that the entire play can be rehearsed in two hours with plenty of time for comments and the retaking of certain scenes. Or an evening rehearsal can be spent on one act only, with an hour and a half allowing enough time to do the act several times. The play can be prepared easily in eighteen or nineteen rehearsals.

Stage Problems

The scene is a simple interior with a door down right and another down left. An arch, or other opening, in the center of the back wall leads upstairs on one side and outdoors on the other. We eliminated the arch in our setting as shown in the photograph.

Lighting

The play calls for no unusual lighting effects. The usual spots and border lights do nicely for the first two acts. The third act takes place in the evening, so dim the borders and use spots, with table lamps on stage for evening effect. Also dim the exterior flood way down if you have a window in your set. We used a window up-center with a light amber flood shining through it for the daylight scenes.

Costuming

Costuming the play presents two problems. The first is the pair of knickers which are so essential to the plot. I was surprised to discover how difficult it was to ferret out a pair. They seem to be relics of a by-gone day. The other problem concerns a costume change which must be made during one page of dialogue. Hildegard says, "But I'm not even dressed," and dashes off upstairs on page 69. Exactly nineteen speeches later she is to return dressed in her evening gown, and ready for the prom. We slowed the tempo of the lines

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a trifle and added a speech to allow her more time for the change. On page 70, Mother can call twice before Hildegard answers, "Almost ready. Be right there." Then Mrs. Shermer says, "My little boy — in long pants!" I had her lead up to this by first saying, "Freddie — come here. Let me look at you."

We set up a screen directly back of the stair exit for Hildegard to make her change, and with the help of a costume girl, she was able to appear on cue but always out of breath. Writers should allow more than nineteen short speeches in which to make a change of costume.

Make-up

The play presents no serious problems in make-up. In one scene Hildegard appears with beauty mud on her face and later appears without it. In our production she applied the mud (dark brown liner) only to her cheeks and chin so that it would not be necessary to remove and re-apply her eye and mouth make-up for the next scene.

Budget

The cost of producing the Dolson — family play is nominal. It requires no costume expense and no special effects with lights or setting. The boy who played Bob made his own prop "bass" for the fish scene. He did this by hinging two small pieces of wood together and attaching a strong rubber-band across the top to connect them. Then by holding the tin pieces on the bottom of each piece he was able to cause the

"fish", which was wrapped in a newspaper, to jump and wiggle realistically.

Publicity

Our major cost was for publicity. We ran an ad in four issues of the local paper and printed 900 post cards announcing the production. These were sent to the parents of all high school students and to other known patrons of school events. The card-mailing scheme proved successful on other occasions and was again effective in informing the public of the play.

Results

Those who produce *We Shook the Family Tree* will find the results satis-

fying to both the cast and the audience. The play is short and simple enough to do easily, yet it provides much human interest and good entertainment. The seven juvenile roles offer opportunities to immature but talented actors, and the four character parts offer a challenge to those with more experience. Rehearsing a play of this type is a pleasant, relaxing experience for a director who has several major productions to do during the year and wishes to provide the play-going public with a variety of theatrical fare. It is wholesome, clean and typically American entertainment.

March Issue: **THE GENTLE PEOPLE**



Scene from Act I of *We Shook the Family Tree* as produced by Thespian Troupe 650 of the Rochester, Minnesota, High School. Directed by B. E. Moeller.

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DRAMA FOR CHILDREN

By LOUISE C. HORTON

835 W. Farnum St.,
Royal Oak, Mich.

This Department has for its purpose the advancement of the Children's Theatre Movement in America. Directors and teachers are urged to report to Miss Horton, for publication in this Department, news of their productions and other significant projects.

A new children's theatre is the Stage Door Studio organized last year by Jean Poull in Eugene, Oregon. Mrs. Poull reports that at the time of her opening, Eugene had never had children's theatre nor a real dramatics studio. She writes: "When I opened my studio last year the most common question I was asked was 'What do they do?', so I spent a good part of the year explaining the value of dramatics."

The first production of the Stage Door Studio was an ambitious one — Charlotte Chorpennig's *ALICE IN WONDERLAND* — and as it turned out, a most successful one. The actors ranged from seven (the Dormouse) to seventeen (the King), and presented five performances. One or two of the effective costumes were used as demonstration material in a drama class at Oregon University.

Mrs. Poull plans several performances of *The Wizard of Oz* the last of January and of *Little Women* in April, and is hoping to take them both out of town.

Unlike the Stage Door Studio which operates on the private studio basis, the Johns Hopkins Children's Experimental Theatre operates on the creative dramatics approach basically, although much work is also done in regular memorized plays. Last summer several performances of *Rumpelstiltskin* and *Heidi* were given by this group. One special performance was presented for the bene-

fit of the Children's Crusade, the United Nations appeal for children, for which they raised \$90.00.

This year, in addition to their scheduled program, they presented a performance of *HEIDI* at the Baltimore Polytechnic Auditorium, December 19, under the auspices of the Boumi Temple. Of interest, too, is the report that *HEIDI* has been televised over station WMAR-TV.

The theatre's regular schedule for the year is as follows:

HEIDI, October 23 (2 performances)
TREASURE ISLAND, January 15 (2 performances)
LITTLE WOMEN, March 19 (2 performances)
ALADDIN, May 14 (2 performances)

In addition to the four plays scheduled, there are two open house programs — at Christmas time and in May — when children in the dance and music are given further opportunity to appear before an audience. Tee-agers interested in phases of play production other than acting are given practice in lighting, make-up, painting, building and shifting scenery, the assembling of properties and their management, ushering, assisting in direction — all the elements of a production from the introduction of the story or play to its final mounting. Membership is limited.

Two methods by which story material is transformed into a play are used:

(1) The story is discussed by the group as to characterization, dialogue, action, plot, and scene division, and thus an outline is made and used for final rehearsals. This method is a modification of what has come to be known as creative dramatics and is used primarily with younger children.

(2) After discussion of the elements outlined in method 1, formal scripts are given to the children to be memorized. This method is used with older children.

Although still one year short of voting age, **DRAMATICS** has attained full maturity and is entitled to adult consideration in its field. The National Thespian Society has earned congratulations on the creation of a magazine with high ideals and wide appeal. —Talbot Pearson, Department of Drama, Carnegie Institute of Technology.

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Director of the group, Frances Cary Bowen, had an article entitled, "Let's Give a Play," published in THE PACKET (Heath's Service Bulletin for Elementary Teachers).

Children's Theatre at the University of Minnesota, under the direction of Kenneth L. Graham, is celebrating its first year with performances of CADDIE WOODLAWN (Feb. 4-17) and HUCK FINN (April 25-May 7). They are both by local writers, the first by Carol Brink; the dramatized version of the second by Frank Whiting.

A very active group is the Community Junior Theatre of Columbus, Ohio. One major show is set for each month through May, with the exception of December. Many colleges in the area contribute to the series. On November 26, Edwin Strawbridge's New York Company opened the season with *The Snow Queen*. The year's program also includes: *Hansel and Gretel* (Ohio Wesleyan Players); *Little Red Riding Hood* (Denison University Children's Theatre); *The Glowing Bird* (Tatterman Marionettes).

Five years ago the Junior League of Columbus established this theatre. Now an advisory board, made up of members of the Child Conservation League, the school board, the clergy and other agencies especially interested in children, makes the selection of presentations to be featured during the year.

The Children's Studios of Speech and Dramatics Arts, Washington, D. C.,

under the direction of Rose Robison Cowen, have moved their headquarters to 3815 Livingston St. N.W. Mrs. Cowen writes: "We now have our own little auditorium which will seat 100 people or more; 12'x16' stage; three large studio rooms; and a basement for building scenery." The first week in December saw their production of *Alice in Wonderland*, with four performances given at the Roosevelt High School.

ANTA, with the co-operation of the theatre section, Division of Civil Affairs, Department of the Army, has organized

an exhibit to represent a true picture of the American Theatre. They chose five representative children's theatres to participate:

1. The Children's Experimental Theatre, Baltimore, Maryland. Isabel B. Burger, Dir.
2. Cain Park Children's Theatre, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Kenneth L. Graham, Dir.
3. Children's World Theatre, Inc., New York City. Monte Meacham, Director.
4. Palo Alto Community Children's Theatre, Palo Alto, Calif. Hazel C. Robertson, Dir.
5. Goodman Memorial Theatre Children's Series, Chicago. Charlotte B. Chorpennig, Director.

Under the direction of Lida Lynn Parke, the Altruria Drama Club presents programs of short plays for children regularly in the Steele Community Center, Denver. Mrs. Parke also conducts at the Center a course in Junior dramatics which includes puppetry, music, dances, scenery, lighting, and provides experience in completed productions.

Hobby Horse Review, Chicago radio program, presented the following children's writers during November-December:

- November 6 - Walter Brooks
- November 13 - Joseph W. Lippencott
- November 20 - Louise Rankin
- November 27 - Walter Farley
- December 4 - Dilla Mac Bean, Ruth Harshaw
- December 11 - Kate Seredy
- December 18 - Charles Tazewell
- December 25 - Ruth Sawyer
- January 1 - Eleanor Estes

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Joan of Arc (Ingrid Bergman) is brought to trial on charges of heresy after she has been taken captive. The scene is from Sierra Pictures' Technicolor film, *Joan of Arc*, released through RKO.

THE FILM OF THE MONTH

By H. KENN CARMICHAEL

Department of Drama, Los Angeles City College,
Los Angeles, California.

This department is designed to direct attention to the outstanding motion pictures of the 1948-49 season. Suggestions for future discussions are welcomed by the Department Editor.

JOAN OF ARC

MAXWELL ANDERSON'S *Joan of Lorraine*, of the 1946 Broadway season, has reached the screen in far better shape than was expected in most quarters. Despite elaborate trappings and a mass of spectacular production details that dwarf most of the huge cast, Ingrid Bergman, as Joan, and Jose Ferrer, as the Dauphin, come through with moving performances. The Walter Wanger production, released by RKO Radio, is one of the top pictures of 1949.

Crammed with scenes that range from tremendous excitement to tearful sentimentality, and running for nearly two and a half hours, the film, retitled *Joan of Arc*, is one of those authentic screen biographies that too seldom come out of Hollywood. While the picture makes no profound inquiry into the institutions and conflicting passions of Joan's day, it is a thoroughly documented re-creation of the country maid's turbulent history and the events that led to her burning at the stake. Drama clubs will find a wealth of opportunity for reading and discussion. Of particular value should be comparisons with other memorable Joans of dramatic literature, such as Shakespeare's (in Part One of *Henry VI*) and Shaw's (in *Saint Joan*). Special interest should be found, too, in the transformation of the Anderson stage play into the screen story, which omits the original play-within-a-play technique.

Star Ingrid Bergman played the original Anderson Joan in New York, a role tailored to her talents. Director Victor Fleming was responsible for *Gone With the Wind*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Captain Courageous*, and many of the early Douglas Fairbanks, Sr., films. Producer Walter Wanger is credited with *Foreign Correspondent*, *The Long Voyage Home* and *Stagecoach*. Scriptwriter Andrew Solt, who collaborated with Maxwell Anderson (*The Eve of St. Mark*, *Winter set*, *Elizabeth the Queen*) on the screen adaptation of *Joan*, created the screenplays for *The Jolson Story* and *Little Women*.

Shooting on *JOAN OF ARC* began in September of 1947 with a budget of close to \$5,000,000 and a one-year lease on the large Hal Roach motion picture lot. Research activities ranged from the Congressional Library to the French Research Foundation; the French Jesuit Father Paul Doncoeur, foremost living authority on Joan, came from Paris to lend technical advice; and the research "bible" for the production was Jules Quicherat's six-volume record of Joan's trial for heresy.

The supporting cast is topped by veteran stage actor Jose Ferrer for whom this is a screen debut. Francis Sullivan, the Jagers of the fine British film, *Great Expectations*, creates a credible Cauchon, Count-Bishop of Beauvais who conducted the trial at Rouen which led to Joan's execution. J. Carrol Naish plays the one-eyed John of Luxembourg and Ward Bond the blustering French General La Hire. There are some 240 speaking parts in the picture, of which

over 70 assume importance in the sweep of the story.

The many sets for *Joan of Arc*, created under the supervision of art director Richard Day (*The Razor's Edge*, *The Ghost and Mrs. Muir*), includes Rheims Cathedral, the 11th century Castle of Philip-Augustus at Rouen, the battleground at Orleans, the castle grounds at Chinon and Sully, the village of Domremy and the town of Vaucouleurs. One of the large sound stages on the Hal Roach lot had never been given the finishing touch of a floor; this white elephant was used to advantage by bulldozing the earth into various contours of French countryside.

The Technicolor of the picture may at times be too rich, but cameraman Joe Valentine (*Sleep My Love*) has done a commendable job of muting the color to a low key in the opening and closing scenes, intensifying the mood of of the film at those points. At the stake, for example, the only apparent color is the flame and the executioner's red tunic. Some of the battle sequences contain short close-in action shots that are dramatically composed by montage-expert Slavko Vorkapich, world-famous now for his contributions to motion picture technique.

The costume and property departments for *JOAN* were prodigious in their output. Over 400 costumes were individually designed from authoritative data, and both French and English armies were fitted with endless impedimenta. A division of the costume work into four sections concentrated special skills in restricted areas: heraldry, court, peasant and ecclesiastical. An interesting technical development lay in the discovery that, while expensive materials—such as metal cloth, faille, brocade, velvet and velour—proved photogenic for the men's clothing, the ladies of the court photographed best in burlap. This humble material, dyed and lined, gave the rich, heavy, hand-woven effect of medieval garments.

New York's Metropolitan Museum armor expert was commissioned to do Miss Bergman's battle dress, which re-

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sulted in a finely articulated suit of aluminum armor that weighed a mere 20 pounds. The rest of the armored players used 150 suits that had been mass-produced from a magnesium alloy by a speed-boat manufacturer. Powdered pumice was applied to the gleaming metal of Joan's suit to eliminate the reflection in it of director and cameramen and still leave the armor shining. One of the major headaches proved to be chain mail; the real thing averages 60 pounds per tunic, a heavy handicap to actors. A solution was reached by a jewelry novelty plant, where finally a feather-weight substitute was fabricated in the multiple-ring pattern of the early 15th century.

A detail of five men from the prop department dubbed the Armored Division, was assigned to day-and-night repair of armor damaged in the simulated Battle of Orleans. Thrown in a nasty spill during one of the actions, Miss Bergman somersaulted and lay prone; with director Fleming's anxious inquiry as to her health came armor-expert Howard's equally anxious question — "Is the armor dented?" Bergman was not hurt, but the knee articulators had jammed like collapsible drinking cups. A pair of pliers put the star in acting order. The armor was a constant annoyance. At one time Ward Bond, playing the general in black armor and rarely exposed beyond eyes and ears dryly commented, "Canned ham."

As in other spectacles of DeMille proportions, the property department's sheets read like a museum inventory: specially designed and built crossbows, tents, shields, lances, quivers, arrows, scaling ladders, scythes, picks and forks, statue of St. Catherine, pennants, banners, swords, a king's scepter, crucifixes, torches, one croquet set, dog collars, anvils, cymbals, canteens, pikes, musical instruments, one throne, benches, a bed — roughly one-tenth of the film's property needs.

The make-up department, headed by veteran Jack Pierce, successfully kept the men authentic but believable in their medieval hairdos. Chief among the irritating tasks was keeping Miss Bergman's complexion haggard during the court scenes; her blood goes coursing under emotional excitement, and it required constant attention to prevent the cameras from recording the blush on her cheek. The film Joan is the simple girl of the fields: no lipstick, eyebrow pencil or rouge, only the tanned face and authentic short page-boy.

Belgian and Percheron horses were brought from Iowa to take the heavy load of actor and campaign dress in the battle scenes, a weight of 75 pounds over normal. The fine steeds were given special schooling by trainers wearing full armor to accustom the horses to the noise in front of the cameras — noise which in many instances had to be edited out of the sound track and replaced by more realistic, but hand-made, sounds of clanking armor.

Joan of Arc was completed on schedule after 82 days of shooting. Five months were required for the editing.

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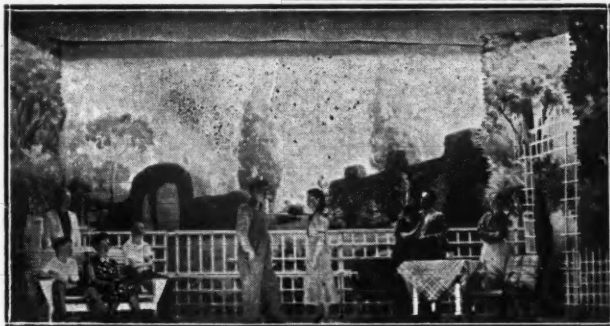
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The Radio Program of the Month

By S. I. SCHARER, Radio Department

New York University, Washington Square, N. Y.

The purpose of this department is to direct attention to the outstanding radio programs on the air during the 1948-49 school year. Comments and suggestion from readers are welcomed by the Department Editor.

MR. ACE & JANE

RADIO comedians have been subjected to heavy criticism in the last few years. It is pointed out that originality has bowed out of the picture almost completely and has been replaced by the "twist." Jack Benny, for example, has pinched pennies in so many thousands of different ways that one feels it really doesn't matter much anymore; the shiny pennies have long since become dull.

The more astute radio comedians are at last comprehending that something must be done — quickly. Fred Allen even tried dropping Senator Claghorn for a while. Bob Hope no longer has Vera Vague and Jerry Colonna to plague his audience. Others, too, are making what to them are great changes.

A radio comedian is no better than his writers and it is in this department that a new broom is badly needed. Unfortunately, the needed broom has failed to materialize.

Goodman Ace, who writes and stars on "Mr. Ace & Jane", has for years been one of the

top writers in the business. Here is a writer who treats his listeners to really funny material week after week. A master of the pun, Ace has never held to the idea that the radio audience is a peculiar group of individuals with sub-adult mentality. His wit is always refreshing; his satire devastating. Especially effective is his treatment of the hackneyed expressions people use so thoughtlessly day after day.

Ace's lampoons at conventional speech are very ably executed by his real and radio wife, JANE. Although at first hearing many of Jane's utterances appear merely frivolous corruptions of convention expressions, re-examination will frequently show that quite often there is more to them than first meets the ear.

When someone says "hello" to Jane, her answer is invariably "just fine." This serves to eliminate a few superfluous and banal exchanges. If she hasn't met the person before, she acknowledges the introduction with "pleased to meet your acquaintance."

Jane, who has an aunt made "immaturely gray" by worry, and other rela-

tives "too humorous to mention," studied "domestic silence" in school. Before she was married she used to be "fool face and fancy free."

She tells her husband he's a "ragged individualist," occasionally rebukes him for being "such a tight-rope" and for "running around like a chicken with its hat off," but generally speaking, she feels that she's got him "in the hollow of my head."

Once she decided he was taking her "too much for granite" and announced: "Let me tell you, my tar-feathered friend, one of these days you'll have to change your tic-tacs."

But she soothes him when he's overworking by insisting: "Relapse, dear, relapse." When Jane make up her mind to do something, she's firm. She is convinced for one thing, that a "vacation by car is not what it's jacked up to be." She's equally certain that she "wants to earn some money for a rainy day so I won't be a parasol."

She knows how to keep a secret, too, "dumb's the word," she solemnly observes, adding that she's willing to be sworn to secrecy "on a stack of wheat-cakes."

Jane feels that "love makes the world go around together," but she thinks a husband who runs around with other women is a "regular Bluebird."

She's very frank in her appraisals of people. "He looks like a page out of Escrow," she's likely to announce. Or, "she's as old as Macushla." Of course, when someone speaks with a "southern droll," Jane is quick to notice that, too.

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A textbook on the use of radio broadcasting as an educational tool in the secondary schools, written by Everett C. Braun, Public Schools, San Luis Obispo, Cal. and Frederick J. Stanley, radio writer and producer. Practical suggestions and ideas for school radio classes and broadcasting. All phases of radio broadcasting are treated, such as: Types of Programs, Planning the Program, Form of the Script, Timing the Program, Microphone Technique, Sound Effects, etc. 247 pages. Cloth bound.

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When she has something to tell Mr. Ace, it usually takes her a while to get started. "Well," she will say, "to make a long story, I'll begin at the beguine."

When she finds that she's "under the wrong impersonation" of who's who at a given time, she's apt to describe her error as a "case of mishapen identity." And when other people are wrong, she lets them know it. "You're barking up the wrong dog," she says.

And if you have any suggestions about anything, don't hesitate to tell them to Jane. "I want you to be suggestive," she declares. "But," she often adds, "don't monotonize the conversation."

Jane manages to talk this way without breaking her stride at all. She and Ace divide the spotlight about equally during the program. A listener who isn't alert may miss many of Jane's revisions of everyday speech, but even then he will be treated to good comedy situations that he will find delightfully amusing.

If the talent for a regularly scheduled 15-minute program on KMBC, Kansas City, hadn't failed to show up one evening early in 1930, Goodman and Jane Ace might today be a pleasant Missouri couple, the former perhaps still a newspaperman and local broadcaster. Or, if you're of a fatalistic turn of mind about such things as success, the Aces would have achieved national fame as radio's original comedy couple via a different rung or a different ladder.

Ace's talent for writing began to bear fruit when he was 17 and a student of Northeast



Goodman Ace and his wife, Jane, stars of CBS' weekly comedy series, "Mr. Ace and Jane," make a last-minute script change before air time.

High School in Kansas City. His first real recognition came when he received a prize for his paraphrase of Guy de Maupassant's *A PIECE OF STRING*. During his senior year, he edited the school paper.

Ace's first job was as drama critic of the old Kansas City *JOURNAL POST*, where he stayed 12 years before breaking into radio, meanwhile marrying Jane, who had been his girl friend during high school.

Station KMBC gave Ace his first radio work, which consisted of such highly miscellaneous matters as doing a radio version of his newspaper column under the billing of "The Movie Man" and even reading the funnies at \$10 per show. A cautious one, he held on to his *JOURNAL POST* job too.

Here's how the Aces got their break. One evening in 1930, Ace had just done his regular stint as "The Movie Man" when it became apparent that the talent for the next fifteen minute show wasn't going to show up. A station official exhorted Ace to keep talking. Ace summoned spouse Jane, who was waiting outside the studio, and for 15 unpredictable minutes they ad-libbed, mostly about a bridge game they played the night before.

Their show acquired a sponsor and rolled merrily along. So merrily, in fact, that after several months Ace asked for a \$50 raise. The sponsor balked. Ace quit — for one night. The phone calls were so heavy that a new sponsor coughed up the extra fifty and "Easy Aces" resumed. "We had a lot of relatives in Kansas City," Ace has drolly observed since.

It wasn't long afterward that an advertising agency representative dropped in at KMBC and asked Ace how he'd like to take "Easy Aces" to Chicago on a network basis. It wasn't as dazzling as all that, however. The representative told Ace he'd pay expenses for the move but couldn't guarantee much else. Crossing his fingers and shooting, he thought at the moon, Ace said they'd go for \$500. To his astonishment it was a deal.

Ace still was not one to dynamite his bridges behind him. In order to keep

his newspaper berth warm for him in case the radio show suddenly folded, Ace continued to write his column — gratis — seven days a week during the shows' first 13-week run.

When the Aces' first option was picked up, Ace felt more confident, but not exactly reckless. He curtailed his unremunerated newspaper efforts to three columns a week. Another option was renewed and Ace correspondingly confined himself to writing only a Sunday column for the *JOURNAL-POST* back home. During their second year of radio, he figured "Easy Aces" was riding easily enough for him to drop the column altogether.

"Easy Aces," which Ace himself wrote from the start, continued to be a top flight network feature for 14 years (through January, 1945), 12 of them under the same sponsorship.

Ace's next radio chore was as chief writer for Danny Kaye's comedy show in 1945 and 1946. In August 1946, Ace was appointed Supervisor of CBS Comedy and Variety Programs, a post created especially for him.

The urge to return to active broadcasting with a half-hour show patterned after "Easy Aces" but comprising a completely different situation-comedy format with more emphasis on action prompted Ace's resignation from his executive position at CBS and resulted in the premiere of "Mr. Ace & Jane" on February 14th. As Ace puts it, he decided to return to the air instead of being a desk jockey.

Ace, whom Damon Runyon once dubbed "one of the world's greatest wits," is six feet tall, weighs 175, has blue eyes and reddish blond hair. He enjoys writing, smokes cigars incessantly, and is forever being sought for advice on gags, which he gives freely.

If you haven't yet met the Aces and you enjoy sophisticated comedy, invite them to your home this Friday evening at 8:30.

RING AROUND ELIZABETH

By Charl Armstrong

A Comedy in Three Acts

This entertaining three-act comedy was first produced in New York with Jane Cowl in the starring role. Elizabeth is the hard-taxed center of an irritating household. Her husband is a dullard; one of her daughters is hysterically in love with a cynical play-boy; the other is very stridently precocious. There's a selfish old mother who hoards antiques and a fussy father-in-law who chases fires, and a nosey house guest and a bossy cook. And most of these people are worse than usual because they are panting after a legacy that Elizabeth has received. Having reached the breaking point, Elizabeth contracts a nice case of

5 males, 7 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

amnesia, in which twenty years are blotted out and she is a girl again. This enables her not only to indulge in caprices like taking up with her daughter's young man, but also to tell all the members of the family what she thinks of them. All of these doings show results that promise well for the future of Elizabeth and her family.

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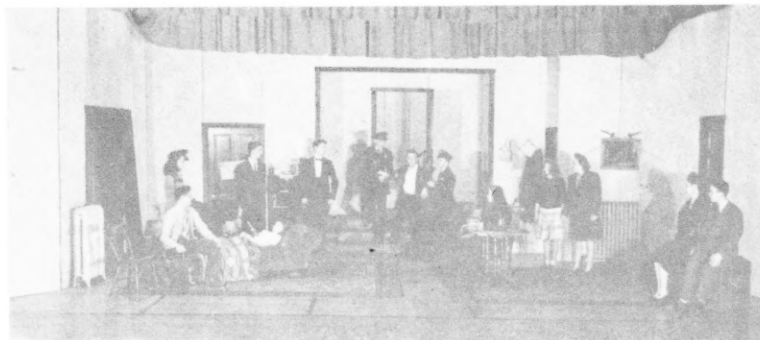
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OUT OF THE FRYING PAN

By Francis Swann

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7 males, 5 females. Interior. Modern costumes.

he runs out of flour. He comes upstairs to borrow a cup. At last! The kids have him in the house, and they aren't going to let him out until he sees some evidence of their ability. So to impress him they stage a murder scene. It is so realistic that police swarm into the scene and the misunderstanding becomes hilarious when it is discovered the girl who is playing the corpse has been served a mickey finn. However, in spite of everything, what seems to be a profitable friendship springs up, and it looks as if the future might hold some promise for the youngsters. "... proved to be one of the merriest Broadway events in weeks. . . it has an underlying ring of truth that makes it human as well as amusing."—*New York Post*.

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If you stop short of smashing the piano, there isn't much you can do at Pongo's household that will cause the raised eyebrow or the sharp intake of breath. But when word comes that Uncle Fred has left his country place (As Pongo describes it, "He has a nasty habit of slipping his collar") and is headed for town, the family blanches to the core—especially poor Pongo. Uncle Fred gets his greatest pleasure from dragging his reluctant, teen-age, nephew Pongo through one bewildering scrape after another. He even goes to the length of introducing Pongo to the most beautiful girl he'd ever seen as a veterinarian come to pare the claws of a pet parrot! It's no wonder the unfortunate Pongo regards Uncle Fred as he would a sack of dynamite he found lighting up in his presence—and well he should! This time Uncle Fred insists on taking Pongo to Mitching Hill—a suburb—and since it started to rain, calmly pushes into the nearest home and takes over!

It's there they meet this beautiful girl, and Pongo is forced to pretend he's a veterinarian. This is extremely difficult for it's love at first sight for Pongo. Then when the girl's obnoxious suitor arrives, Pongo can hardly contain himself. Uncle Fred, however, happily involves them deeper and deeper. In shame-faced despair, Pongo wants to drag Uncle Fred away from the house and out of Mitching Hill entirely, but the beaming Uncle Fred won't budge. He likes to spread sweetness and light, he explains. "Even in a foul hole like Mitching Hill, I asked myself, how can I leave this foul hole a better and happier foul hole than I found it?" And he does—even to the point of having the police pick up "a suspicious looking character" who happens to be the owner of the house they've pushed into. This looks like the final blow to Pongo's romance, but it isn't. This famous and brilliant comedy will absolutely delight your cast and audience alike. We thoroughly recommend it.

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